THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. 110, NO. 17 NEW YORK, MONDAY, APRIL 24, 1944 NUMBER 1534

Dangerous Talk by General MacArthur

General MacArthur now says he did not expect his correspondence with Representative A. L. Miller of Nebraska to be published; but whether he did or didn't, it was dangerous and foolish talk—of a sort that should debar its author from further serious consideration by intelligent Americans. His remarks about the New Deal were mere voodoo, on the Frank Gannett intellectual level; but his remarks about the allocation of supplies to the Pacific and the European theatres of war were ominous indeed. They served notice that if by some calamity he were elected President of the United States, he would change the whole strategy of the war, regardless of the views of our allies. People often go back to the Grant administration as an example of the danger of putting a popular military figure into the White House, for which his whole career has unfitted him; but General Grant never proposed anything like the folly that General MacArthur suggests. We wish we could believe that this revelation of his mind had put an end to his political career. It ought to.

Exit, Giraud

General Giraud now makes his exit from the French national scene. There has been some grumbling among the members of the Committee of National Liberation over his fate, but not enough, apparently, to upset the edict which dismissed him. His enforced withdrawal is another proof of the ineptness of American foreign policy. We bet on Giraud for no sensible reason that anyone could discover, except perhaps that Robert Murphy liked him, and that Mr. Roosevelt didn't like General de Gaulle. The President said a few months ago that "there is no France"; but he was wrong. There is enough of a France to cast out Mr. Roosevelt's favorite—partly, no doubt, for that very reason. Mr. Hull a week ago tacitly admitted that the liberals have been right all along, when he conceded to the French Committee about everything it could ask, short of outright and formal recognition. This country usually does the proper thing—about a year too late, and after making all possible trouble for ourselves and everybody else in the meantime.

Not So Moronic

The "moronic little King" turns out to be not so moronic after all—assuming, that is, that he makes his own policy. Under great pressure to abdicate, pressure in which it is said the United States has at last joined, he refuses. On the day we take Rome—which now looks as though it may be very far off—he will "retire from public affairs" and name the Prince of Piedmont as lieutenant-general. Thus he keeps the monarchy intact; he keeps the door open even for his own final return to power; and for the present, he freezes the status quo. Even Boss Tweed could take lessons from a politician as smart as that. Most of the six chief political parties have reluctantly agreed now to support the Badoglio regime and accept the King's course. They had to; Russia had recognized Badoglio outright, and if the liberals kept aloof, Badoglio and the Communists would be able to run Italy by themselves.

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PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1944, IN THE U.S.A. BY EDITORIAL PUBLICATIONS, INC., 40 EAST 49 ST., NEW YORK 17, N. Y.
ENTERED AS SECOND-CLASS MATTER, NOVEMBER 6, 1914, AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, N. Y., UNDER THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1879
PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

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Honor to Robert Lovett

Robert Morss Lovett, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago, former editor of The New Republic, and known everywhere as one of the outstanding progressives of his generation, was until recently Government Secretary (and later Executive Assistant to the Governor) of the Virgin Islands. He was forced out of office by a reactionary cabal in the United States House of Representatives, which hated him for his liberalism and got rid of him by abolishing his job. Dr. Lovett is bringing suit for restoration to office, and we hope for the sake of American democracy (not for his sake, since it makes no important difference in his life) that he is successful.

The people of the Virgin Islands, who really know Dr. Lovett, gave him an extraordinary demonstration of their respect and affection when he left—a demonstration such as not one of his traducers in Congress, we are confident, has received or ever could. Hundreds of his admirers attended the affair and gave him, according to the St. Thomas newspaper, The Daily News, "the most tumultuous, heartwarming reception accorded a government official within memory." He was given a resolution passed by the legislature in appreciation of his services; a purse of $2,750 establishing the Robert Morss Lovett Charity Fund; a mahogany tray with an inscription in silver; resolutions honoring him from the St. Croix Council; and speeches in his honor by the President of the Businessmen's Association, the vice-chairman of the Island's Legislative Assembly, and many others. In short, he had a tribute such as comes to only one man in a million. When they read this account his enemies in Congress should have hung their heads in shame; but knowing them, we doubt that they did, or are capable of doing, anything of the kind.

Lambert, in The Philadelphia Record

"No, Thank You!"

Montgomery Ward and the WLB

A sharp dispute is now in progress among Montgomery Ward and Company, a union claiming to represent its employees, and the War Labor Board. The WLB on January 15 ordered Montgomery Ward and Company to continue its contract with 7,000 Ward employees in Chicago, pending a decision by the National Labor Relations Board as to what is the proper bargaining agent for them. The company has not yet complied with the order, and news dispatches say the Board is planning to appeal to President Roosevelt or to Economic Stabilizer Fred Vinson for enforcement. Montgomery Ward has threatened to seek a court injunction against the WLB. Meanwhile, the union members have gone on strike.

A stormy dispute between the big mail-order house and the union has been in progress for some time. NLRB elections were held several years ago in various branches of Montgomery Ward in Chicago, and the union says it won these elections by votes of two to one, eight to one and thirteen to one. Montgomery Ward, however, resisted the terms proposed for the union contract, and especially "maintenance of membership," which it said was a form of the closed shop. On two occasions the War Labor Board referred the case to President Roosevelt, and the company finally agreed to sign. Later, however, although the union had been certified as the bargaining agent in 1942, it was ordered by the War Labor Board to submit to the National Labor Relations Board the question whether it spoke for the workers. In the meantime, Montgomery Ward and Company filed libel suits for heavy damages against a paper published by the workers, and against Business Week, published by the McGraw-Hill Company, which had commented on the case. Montgomery Ward has also sued the Chicago Printing Trades Union for $105,000 because of a strike of union printers working for subcontractors employed by the publishers of the Montgomery Ward catalogue. Drew Pearson predicted on the radio a few days ago that in view of Montgomery Ward's defiance of the WLB, President Roosevelt will order the firm taken over by the government. If he does, it will be an interesting, important and precedent-making act.

It's Cheaper Now

In our supplement on cartels, with our issue of March 27, we said that the Winthrop Chemical Company charged the United States Government $4.50 and civilians $12 per thousand tablets for atabrine, a chemical substitute for quinine. While our state-

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ment was correct as of a few months ago, we understand that since then, prices have been reduced, at least so far as the Winthrop Company is concerned. The civilian price is now $6, and the army-navy price, $3.

Pepper and Hill

Two stalwart liberals in the Senate are facing tough battles in their efforts to get reëlected. Lister Hill of Alabama and Claude Pepper of Florida are both running in primaries in their states early next month, with considerable danger of being defeated. Hill is opposed by James Simpson, a Birmingham attorney who is ultra-conservative and is pulling out all the stops on the "white supremacy" theme. The very things in Hill's record which cause him to be respected by independent progressives throughout the country are being used against him in his own state.

The same is true of Senator Pepper in Florida. He can probably obtain a plurality in the primary, in which he has four opponents; but his friends are worried about his success in the run-off election. His votes against the poll tax, in favor of the veto on the tax bill, against exempting fire-insurance companies from the anti-trust law and in favor of the reciprocal-trade program, have all alienated various groups. The Associated Industries of Florida, the prototype in that state of the NAM, is against him. As an offset, he has the support of organized labor, of the citrus growers, for whom he obtained higher ceiling prices, and of the liberal press in the larger cities. The Supreme Court "white primary" decision hurt both Hill and Pepper, by inflaming Southern sentiment. In the long run, the tides are with the progressives; but that is not much consolation to men who must win or lose within the next few weeks.

Paging Mr. Bromfield

Last summer Louis Bromfield, in The Reader's Digest, warned that the country would face famine by this February. When February came with no famine, he moved his prediction ahead to April. Now it is April; and what do we find? We find that there is such a glut of last year's potatoes and this year's eggs that a big advertising campaign has been started to have people eat as many of them as possible. This week is "Potato Week," and "Egg Week" comes next. Keep on prophesying, Louis; we love to hear you.

Something to Think About

We got a letter a few days ago from the Newspaper Committee of the United States Victory Waste Paper Campaign, urging us to save paper and to tell everybody else to do so. This we hereby do. Incidentally, the letter of the USVWPC—which might just as well have been a postcard—weighed exactly half a pound, costing 24 cents to mail.

Mr. Nelson on Reconversion

Donald Nelson has appointed a nine-man advisory committee on reconversion, which promises to be better than most progressives would have expected. Representatives of labor, management, heavy industry, distribution, agriculture, consumers, public opinion and finances will jointly face the problems involved in returning to a peacetime economy. Advisory committees in Washington frequently mean less than nothing; but Nelson seems sincere in saying that he genuinely wants advice from the whole community. At least, he is entitled for the present to the benefit of the doubt.

Minnesota Prepares for November

Minnesota Democrats and Farmer-Laborites have finally found a basis for unifying their two parties, both practically and officially. The Farmer-Labor Party is no longer in existence; a new coalition organization known as the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party has taken its place.

Merging of these two groups should help the Democratic ticket in the presidential race this year. Even conservative politicians are willing to concede that, on the basis of the new unity, the party might succeed in taking a congressional seat or two away from the Republicans.

Allied Plans for Germany

THE NEWS that the three great Allied powers have come to an agreement on the military occupation of Germany is important. The question of what to do with Germany in the event of victory has been in recent months the great rock of dispute against which have dashed the waves of discussion. It has also been a rock set squarely in the course of Allied unity. It is now stated from London "on high authority"—which means that the news comes from the European Advisory Commission or from General Eisenhower, or both—that the Russians have agreed to an Anglo-American plan for apportioning the military occupation of Germany.

The exact nature of the plan is not yet clear. But it has been pretty generally understood in London for some time that it involves a partition of Germany into three zones of occupation. The Russians, it is said, will administer the military rule of eastern Germany to the Oder; the British will administer northwestern Germany; and the Americans will administer Bavaria, Saxony and Württemberg; while the Rhineland would be under Anglo-American control and Berlin under the joint control of all three countries. Under this plan military government, which has by no means been a success in Italy, would not be used anywhere else in Europe except in Germany and the satellites who do not break away from her.

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This plan is as important for what it leaves unsaid as for what it says. For it says nothing about the terms to be imposed on Germany, nothing of the much discussed question of German dismemberment, nothing of the German economy and its control. This is not to underestimate the importance of the mere fact of agreement among the three powers on the question of military occupation itself. For this can and must be the entering wedge for more complete agreement on the more difficult questions that remain. It is evidence that the military and political leaders of the Allied peoples do not intend to let anything split them on the eve of triumph.

There is, then, the determination on common action. But it would be pretty naïve to believe that an agreement on occupation reaches very far beyond the surface of the problem of Germany itself.

The core of the problem is how to organize Germany so that she will not prove an obstacle to an enduring peace. To that every other aspect of the problem must be subordinate. That must be the shaping consideration for everything else.

There is, for example, the question of punishment and retribution. Millions of words have flowed into the sluices of arguments for a harsh or a humane treatment of the Germans, for a Catonian peace or an understanding one. But to put the problem in such a way is to miss the crucial element of it. One cannot speak of being harsh or humane in a vacuum. The big question is, to whom shall we be harsh and to whom humane? The people of Europe to whom Germany has been merciless have for a long time been damming up their hatred and their thirst for revenge. Will it be the German common people on whom this wrath will be visited, or the leaders who planned all the crimes which the people executed? The moral problem is a difficult one, but the practical problem seems clear. If you destroy the leaders, the Germans may be able under Allied direction to chart a new course. If you let the leaders escape, they will live to organize another thrust at world power. It is the generals, the Gestapo, the party leaders and subalterns, the Gauleiters and administrative heads, the industrialists and financiers who must be broken.

Then there is the question of geographical dismemberment that is so often raised. It is an appealing solution to those who believe that a nation can be partitioned and thereby cease to exist. Yet it is a dangerous solution, and at bottom a false one. At present the Germans have not a friend in the world. They have relied on force alone—force without justice—and have paid the price that is exacted of those who use force alone. But turn the tables on them thus, and you make martyrs of them. At present there is a chance that the German people, after their defeat, can be aroused to understand how deeply their leaders betrayed them. But parcel Germany up, divide her population into twenty portions, and you have created twenty new Sudetenlands. That will not help an enduring peace, but destroy it.

There is, finally and most important, the question of what to do with the German economy. We regard this as the crux problem of Germany after the war. There are reports, as yet unconfirmed, that the Anglo-American plan calls for the continued operation of German industry during the period of occupation, under the control of the same industrialists who prepared Hitler for his war adventures and are today turning out the munitions that are destroying Allied soldiers and civilians. There are also widespread reports that the Russians do not look upon this plan with favor.

The logic on both sides is fairly clear. If it is true that political power is largely determined by the economic power behind it, then the question of who will hold economic power in Europe may decide the balance of power. It is tragic that balance-of-power considerations should still be operative in the minds of statesmen and business men in the Allied countries, but even a newer world in the making is bound to carry over the dominant traits of the older world. Business and military leaders in both England and America have come to have a healthy respect for the massive power that Russia has displayed, and in some cases respect carries fear with it. As a result, some of these leaders do not want to see the German economy dismantled, but prefer to keep her in postwar Europe under the same cartel mastership within which she has operated. And they want the Anglo-American cartels to maintain their former ties with the German cartels.

The Russians on their part fear what may well become a cartel international that will dwarf and overshadow Russian economic power. There can be little question now that it was Russian suspicion of these cartel connections, and of the behind-the-scenes maneuvers they have been carrying on, that prompted the Russian diplomatic bombshell some months ago in which they accused their Allies of seeking a separate peace with the Germans. And there can also be little doubt that the recent article in the Russian periodical, War and the Working Class, attacking the cartel system at the very time that American Communist leaders were embracing it, shows the Russian anxiety about the fate of the German economy.

We share the fears of the Russians, and think them substantially justified. But we do not agree with what is generally thought to be the Russian solution—the dismantling of German heavy industry and the partition of it among the countries of Europe that have been ravaged by the Germans and need to be rebuilt—in short, a program of economic rather than geographic dismemberment. For one thing, you cannot redistribute heavy industry effectively except to countries that have

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a labor and technical force equipped to run it, that have coal and iron resources to keep it going, and markets for its products. For another thing, what would keep the Germans from rebuilding their heavy industry in time? And when they did, they would rebuild it with the very latest technology and thereby be in a superior position to those who were still using the older machines.

The answer must lie not in this kind of economic negativism, but in a program that leaves the German people with their economic machine but seeks to control it not in the interests of the cartels but in the interests of the people as a whole; and a program also that does not leave the German economy as the only industrialized economy on the Continent, but builds up industrial capacity and living standards elsewhere on the Continent. Neither half of this two-part program will be easy, especially the task of destroying the German cartel system and subjecting industry to the people's controls. But every program for Germany will be hard. The test of it is not whether it is hard, but whether—if it can be carried to accomplishment—it will result in an enduring peace.

Mrs. Lane's Sitdown Strike

FOR A GOOD laugh in rather gloomy times, we suggest the interview with Rose Wilder Lane, printed in The New York World-Telegram on April 3. Mrs. Lane is a novelist who has dramatically "taken to the storm cellar until the Roosevelt administration blows over," by giving up her writing and retiring to a small farm in Connecticut. She emerges long enough, now and then, to launch a blast at the New Deal and our wartime "regimentation," which she seems to regard as being synonymous. According to her, our wartime economy is a fraud and a mistake. "There is no need for this rationing. . . . It can't be done. . . . They've tried price fixing since before the flood and it's never worked. The only effect is to cut down production and encourage black markets. . . . I don't see why I should work to support the Writers' War Board, the OWI and all such New Deal piffle."

But Mrs. Lane's latest interview becomes less amusing when, after several such declarations, she levels three definite and startling charges against governmental agencies. Her first charge is that farmers around Danbury, Connecticut, are "killing hogs and burying them in the ground because they can't get feed for them and they aren't allowed to sell them." Her second: "A friend of mine works eight hours a day three weeks a month in a Bridgeport defense plant. Because he's patriotic he works 10 hours a day the fourth week and he earns $10 less. He's penalized for producing." And third, according to Mrs. Lane, "Six thousand men are on unemployment relief in Hartford, a labor-shortage area, because the government says they must wait 60 days between job shifts."

These are certainly serious allegations for any supposedly responsible citizen to be spreading against the government, and they deserve investigation. The New Republic has got in touch with the various governmental agencies concerned, and here are the results.

Representatives of the Department of Agriculture, both in Danbury and in Washington, deny that there has been any general feed shortage around Danbury since last summer. One official stated that he knows of only one or two instances during the intervening period in which farmers have butchered their hogs for lack of feed. Another official characterized Mrs. Lane's remark as "extremely alarmist."

Representatives of the War Manpower Commission, after diligent attempts to locate the Bridgeport defense plant in which Mrs. Lane's friend works, have given up. They are unable to find a single factory which penalizes its workers for producing, and they promise that if Mrs. Lane can name such a plant, it will be investigated promptly.

Records of the Hartford Unemployment Compensation Committee provide a sufficient answer to Mrs. Lane's third, and most serious, charge. These records show that on March 31, there were exactly 202 claims for unemployment insurance being paid in Hartford. Only part of these claims, of course, were made by men waiting 60 days between job shifts. War Manpower officials point out that the 60-day waiting period is imposed in only a few instances, upon workers who are unable to furnish a satisfactory reason for quitting essential jobs.

Mrs. Lane is insisting to her readers that "We've got to resist [such practices]. The vote will have no effect until we have a politician who'll stand up and tell the truth." Unfortunately, to Mrs. Lane the truth seems to be identical with any allegation that will further her own little private revolt against the war effort.

THE NEW REPUBLIC
A Journal of Opinion

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SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN SUBSCRIPTION, SIX DOLLARS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR

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Hell-Bent for Chaos

I. *The Plans for X-Day*

NOTHING could be more sharply indicative of the current demoralization of American progressive forces than the reception accorded the Baruch-Hancock report on War and Postwar Adjustment Policies. That the commercial press would welcome its Wall Street "realism" and emit long squeals of delight at its economic orthodoxy was clearly to be expected. That important sections of the press would gleefully hail the report as marking the final repudiation of the New Deal and all its works was equally inevitable—and would be of no particular significance were they not this time so nearly right. That the Communist press would wax rhapsodic was inescapable in the light of the present remarkable party line. What was surprising and disturbing was the welcome accorded the report by spokesmen for organized labor and for various liberal groups. Even Mr. Philip Murray expressed the sympathy of the CIO with the basic assumptions underlying the proposals—though he had some suggestions to make about labor participation in their administration—and a part of the liberal press was respectful, if unenthusiastic.

The explanation for this curious behavior is to be sought, no doubt, in the miasmic political environment in which American progressives find themselves today and in the alternatives which that environment nourishes. Against a backdrop designed by Senator George and his Special Committee on Postwar Economic Policy and Planning, the ideas of Messrs. Baruch and Hancock appear the epitome of liberalism. But this is only by way of contrast, and to accept them for this reason is to abandon principle to expediency. It is to embrace a form of appeasement to which discouraged liberals are increasingly prone and to be thankful for crumbs when no less than a loaf will suffice.

Back to Horse-and-Buggy Days. – The Baruch-Hancock report is, on any grounds, an amazing document. It represents, more than anything else, the imposition of a set of pious hopes upon a hard core of reactionary realities. It is Victorian both in its economics and its optimism—and in its gentlemanly refusal to call a problem a problem. Its authors speak glowingly of the "traditional American spirit of private initiative and resourcefulness" which, they hope, will make of the future "an adventure in prosperity." And they let it go largely at that.

Shades of Warren G. Harding, the 1920's, and the Great Depression! Are we once more to leave the problem of high-level employment to the myopic mercies of the American spirit of private initiative? Messrs. Baruch and Hancock suggest that we are. In their view, governmental intervention in the economy should be restricted to the "limited" construction of public works as a means of "helping to fill the valleys of depression."

This is all the more remarkable in the light of their unconcealed admiration for the results of governmental intervention during the war. The war, they suggest, has been a "crucible" for all of the economic systems of the world. And "the American system has outproduced the rest."

This is true. But the system they are here talking about can hardly be said to reflect the "traditional American spirit of private initiative." The last time we saw the private-enterprise system in operation was in 1940, when our gross national product was little more than half what it is today and when nine million persons walked the streets in search of work. In the meantime, we have joined in a colossal economic experiment which has conclusively proved that large-scale governmental intervention can produce full employment and can carry levels of production to previously unimagined heights. That is a lesson which will not be forgotten in the postwar world and which can be forgotten today only at our mortal peril. But it is one which this report has generally managed to overlook.

No Comfort for Progressives. – By no stretch of the imagination can the Baruch-Hancock report provide the basis for a liberal program. This is not to deny that many of its specific proposals are sound and useful. No one will quarrel seriously with the provisions for the speedy termination of war contracts—though in view of the present high level of corporate reserves, it is doubtful whether the problem is a pressing one so far as most prime contractors are concerned. No one, except the monopoly boys, will disagree with the general policy of disposing of government surpluses so as to lessen monopoly—though it may reasonably be doubted that this end can be achieved by the simple expedient of placing the Attorney General on the Surplus Property Policy Board, while turning publicly owned plants back to the same monopoly interests. No one will object to centering responsibility for the "human side of demobilization" in a Director of Work—though some guarantee of employment opportunities after the war might be more encouraging to the boys at the front than the establishment of another employment service. What must make the Baruch proposals unacceptable to progressives is the basic assumption that we are going back to something very like the "normalcy" of the 1920's.

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For in broad economic terms, the report means no less than this: that we have failed to read the history of the Great Depression or to understand the meaning of our wartime prosperity.

This is the seepage theory of economic activity. It assumes that employers create work because cash is burning holes in their pockets and that through the provision of jobs, a part of the cash seeps down to the consuming workers below. It takes no account of the factor of effective demand or of the role of credit in a modern economy. It takes no account of restrictive economic practices or of the extent to which cartels and monopolies indulge in them. It is more unrealistic than anything Vice President Wallace ever dreamed of.

This archaic economic theory runs like a scarlet thread through the reconversion tapestry woven by Messrs. Baruch and Hancock. It underlies their concern that contracts be settled speedily, lest we have "unemployment by audit." It underlies their suggestion for reconversion loans to industry and their consuming interest in the financial aspects of the problems we face. It leads them to neglect the crucial question of employment and to disregard the effects of a badly distributed national income upon consumer demand.

Indeed, they fail even to recognize the existence of a problem in this area. "Enormous demands," they observe, "put aside during the war and added to prewar demands, await satisfaction."

The observation is undoubtedly correct and it is a matter of much hopeful comment by the business planners. Yet it is a point which is only potentially relevant. Enormous demands awaited satisfaction throughout the depression years—waited and waited. That is not the problem. The problem is to devise institutional means by which those demands may be effectively met. Here lies the new frontier and the ultimate proving ground of statesmanship. In financial terms, it means getting purchasing power into the hands of the most numerous groups through assuring them jobs.

What We Should Do on X-Day. – If the Baruch-Hancock report cannot be taken as definitive, what principles should govern national policy with the collapse of the Nazis on X-day? It is possible to answer this question broadly even though we do not know the precise conditions that will then prevail. The George Committee has assumed in its reports that war production will taper off gradually and that reconversion can thus be undertaken in a series of steps. Should this prove to be true, it will simplify the problem. But there is less reason for believing it true today than there was a few months ago.

It now appears that the transition to civilian production will be abrupt, for at least two reasons. First, there can be no relaxation in the total output of the tools of war until Germany is finally knocked out, at which time substantial cutbacks will probably be made all across the board. And second, we have reached the bottom of the barrel so far as manpower is concerned. Thus, even though the material situation has improved and we have small surpluses of such basic industrial metals as aluminum and some types of steel, they cannot be diverted to civilian use in any quantities because the labor is not available to process them. Mr. Nelson and other WPB officials are therefore holding out little hope of any significant increase in the volume of civilian production until X-day has come and gone.

What the impact of the Nazi collapse will then be upon our military requirements is today a secret, but it will be substantial. Published estimates run all the way from an overall reduction of 25 percent in war production to one of 65 or even 70 percent. If we take the middle ground between these extremes, it means that on X-day or shortly thereafter, the government will contract its spending by an amount approximating the total national income in 1932—making the first step toward restoring the civilian economy a broad jump.

This is especially significant, since the problems involved in demobilizing a war economy are more difficult than those encountered in its mobilization, both for economic and for psychological reasons. Reduced to essentials, economic mobilization for war is accomplished through two devices: by the negative one of withholding materials and manpower from any but essential industries or activities, and by the positive one of providing a guaranteed market for the desired types and quantities of production so that industrialists are encouraged to undertake them. Neither device is wholly adequate alone, as we discovered when we tried to persuade the automobile industry to convert to war production before cutting off its supply of materials. But taken together, they provide the effective working tools for a planned economy.

Problems of Demobilization. – In the demobilization phase the situation is different—or at least ours is likely to be so. Then we shall probably retain the negative controls over materials and manpower, for to relax them until our supplies are adequate for both war production and unrestricted civilian production would be to invite chaos and to risk losing the war against Japan. But the positive device of the guaranteed market, while clearly applicable to civilian production—as Mr. Wallace's ever-normal granary testifies—can hardly be expected to appeal as a general proposition to the present Congress. Thus our controls over reconversion will be less direct and probably less effective than were those employed in converting to war production. This does not need to be the case, and I shall argue later that it should not be. But the weight of political realities today is quite obviously against the most rational approach to reconversion problems.

In the second place, psychological barriers encoun-

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tered in demobilization are more troublesome than when we were preparing for war. The point is well illustrated by the extent and severity of the recent epidemic of cutback jitters. Although cutbacks in such programs as magnesium and small-arms production have affected only a few plants and have been more than compensated for by increases in other production programs, their psychological effects were immediate and far-reaching. These were quickly translated into an increased reluctance on the part of employers to undertake additional war contracts—lest they find themselves bested by competitors in the race back to civilian production—and into increased labor turnover as workers sought their own postwar security in a trek back to jobs with a peacetime future. Unless means are discovered to combat such a reaction, we shall find it difficult to reconvert in an orderly manner or, having launched upon the venture, to maintain that sector of our war economy necessary to the final defeat of Japan.

The Task of Reconversion. – It is obvious that the more orderly the reconversion process, the less drastic will be its impact upon employment. Steps should therefore be taken now to ensure that as few obstacles as possible exist to an orderly transition. This means that, so far as employers are concerned, a method must be found to neutralize the competitive disadvantage which will follow from engaging in war production while competitors are capturing the civilian market. That can be done in one of two ways: either by keeping an entire industry, such as the automobile or electric-refrigerator industries, in war production until there is no longer any need for any part of it in the war effort, or by concentrating civilian production in one or a few plants, permitting them to produce "Victory" models in the name of the entire industry.

The objections to the first procedure are numerous and weighty. Such a policy would maximize the shock of reconversion by concentrating it all at once and would lead to the overproduction of the wasteful instruments of war and to unnecessary delay in the production of consumers' goods. The second approach, on the contrary, would permit us to expand the civilian sector of the economy as rapidly as materials and manpower become available without the danger of our confronting another sit-down strike of capital such as hampered our conversion to war. It would also eliminate the difficulties recently encountered by the WPB when it permitted a limited resumption of the manufacture of electric irons and bathtubs and undertook to allocate materials for these purposes in accordance with the proportions of the prewar market supplied by major competitors. The result was to concentrate these civilian programs in tight labor-market areas where they were most likely to hamper war production.

More recently, the WPB has publicly announced a change in policy. On March 9, in a letter to Senator Francis Maloney, Mr. Donald Nelson outlined the new policy to be followed in the matter of cutbacks and the resumption of civilian production:

> If, without interference with the war effort [he wrote], we can give a manufacturer in a non-critical manpower area materials and parts to resume production of things the civilian economy needs, I think it is to the public interest that we do so without waiting until another concern in a critical area is permitted to resume production. This policy may seem hard on the manufacturer in the critical area, but it would be at least an equal hardship on the manufacturer in the non-critical area if he were prevented from resuming production, just because a manufacturer in a critical area could not do so.

The new policy is sound in principle, but of doubtful utility in practice. With that I shall deal in another article.

J. DONALD KINGSLEY

This is the first of two articles. The second will appear in the near future. – THE EDITORS

What Puerto Rico Wants

SPEAKING of their political status—and they speak of it endlessly—Puerto Ricans say that the only thing they have been certain of since 1898 is that their island is a possession of the United States. They are practically unanimous in the conviction that the present relationship is intolerable, but divided as to what status they want. Many support statehood, but others argue that it is a luxury which the island cannot now afford. Probably most Puerto Ricans dream of independence, and not a few shout for it. Responsible leaders, however, shy away from any form of independence which would not give the island at least as much help and protection as it now gets. Recently a dominion or commonwealth status, as a kind of independence, has gained many supporters, though these backers are extremely vague concerning details.

In the last war, Puerto Ricans received American citizenship rights and a much larger measure of self-government. They have been waiting impatiently to see what will come out of the present war. A new bill has been written and offered in the United States Senate, giving the Puerto Ricans a substantial increase in their degree of self-government; but the Senate whittled this down until it grants little except the election of the governor and a few other officials. Many Puerto Ricans felt the original bill was too weak; but it now looks pretty good to them as compared to what the Senate did. As an indication of American intentions, the "reform" bill must be immensely reassuring to world colonial powers.

Meantime the war has moved away from Puerto Rico, weakening her bargaining position. The island is

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no longer at the center of a possible combat zone or the victim of a submarine blockade. Although thousands of Puerto Ricans are in the armed forces, most of them are still in the Caribbean area. There is no war production on the island. Overlooked by the Congress and people of the United States before the war, Puerto Rico is rapidly slipping back into a similar situation of neglect.

The political campaign of 1944 has begun. The Popular Democratic Party says definitely that "status" is not an issue. On the other hand, prominent members of the party spoke vigorously for independence at congressional hearings in Washington on the reform bill. Whether or not status is made an explicit plank in the various platforms, it underlies all other issues.

If the recent registration of new voters can be considered an indication, political interest in Puerto Rico is at an all-time high. More than 277,000 new voters registered—considerably more than half of the total vote in the 1940 election. While no official reports on party affiliation have been given out, each party knows with considerable accuracy how registrants declared. It is generally conceded that the Popular Party will win a clear-cut victory, which will give it undisputed control of the Insular Legislature. In the lower house it has had to depend upon Liberal Party support.

The program of the Popular Party will be continuation and extension of its economic program. The Liberal Party, which has worked with the Popular Democrats since 1940, will probably continue to do so. The Coalitionists, made up of the Union Republicans and the Socialists, appear to be basing their campaign largely on opposition to the Popular Democrats, especially with regard to taxes, and to Governor Tugwell. All parties support the reform bill, despite its recognized inadequacy.

The pulling power of the Popular Party's economic program arises from the fact that it is the first sincere effort to help the shockingly low income group which makes up a vast majority of the population. Even during the past three years of general prosperity, almost half of the 2,000,000 population have had to depend in whole or in part on relief. This situation will not improve until fundamental economic changes are made.

The program of the Popular Democrats is based primarily on the redistribution of income from land and on industrial development. The break-up of large estates proceeds slowly but steadily. The Puerto Rico Land Authority has distributed 5,191 acres of land to 6,110 agricultural laborers. It plans to distribute, ultimately, small holdings to about 125,000 to such laborers. The entire land program, as now planned, will cost about $60,000,000.

Side by side with agricultural reform has gone industrialization. Across the Bay from San Juan a $2,000,000 glass factory, built by the Puerto Rico Development Corporation, an insular agency, will soon go into production. Close by is the profitable, government-owned cement plant, another of the corporation's enterprises. A factory to manufacture wallboard and paper products from bagasse is planned. The Development Bank, making government funds available for industrial development, has begun operating.

Overshadowing every other industrial development, rum-making has reached undreamed-of proportions. In the month of December, 1943, alone, insular revenue from taxes amounted to $6,000,000. Like everything else, however, this increased revenue, which might be a means of improving the economic situation, has become involved with the question of status. The Cole Resolution is taken as an indication that there is sentiment in Congress for curtailing, as well as for increasing, self-government in Puerto Rico.

The island awaits the outcome. Meantime, bitterness toward the United States increases in direct ratio to the delay involved in colonial policy-making.

Santurce, P. R. MARJORIE R. CLARK

So Long, Tex

(This is the last of three sketches by Lieutenant Michael Straight of the United States Army Air Forces, formerly one of the editors and Washington correspondent of The New Republic. – THE EDITORS)

SPIT!"

"You don't like it? Well, you know what you can do, don't you? I'll take two."

"This guy Tex I was telling you about . . . what a character he was! . . . I remember the time we first saw him. We hit Miami Beach after three days on the troop train. We were sitting half dead in the patio of the old Nash Hotel. The palm trees were waving and the sun felt good, and once in a while we'd jump up to watch the cadets march past, wishing like hell we could get out of our civilian clothes and into uniform, so we wouldn't be laughed at any more."

"I'll open for a dime. . . . Sure it's jacks or better."

"All of a sudden two privates and this guy—a pfc—march in. Boy we jumped up! 'Flight L, fall in!' he cried; we sort of shuttled around. We were so raw we didn't know what he meant. He grinned and gave us at ease. He was sunburnt, real dapper, with his clothes tight and his flight cap tilted way over. He wasn't big, but he had a flash in his eye.

" 'I'm Joe Gordon,' he said, 'same name as the ball player; and these here are Privates Shimalewski and Turkowicz. We're your instructors. On the field you call me instructor and them private. If you don't, you'll pull a detail cleaning out a hundred full commodes, and they'll be full if I have to fill them myself'—"

"Raise you a dime."

" 'Off the field,' he says, 'you call me Tex, and them Shimmy and Red. If you don't the beer is on you.'

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"'I'll be honest with you,' he says. 'You're new to this; so am I. You're my first flight. That's why I want you to be good—the best. A lot of instructors here are tough as hell,' he says. 'I want to show them I can turn out the best, another way. But by Christ, men,' he says, 'you'd better coöperate! You may think I've got a kind face,' Tex says, 'like the topkick said to me—the kind you like to throw manure at! But believe me,' he says, 'I can be the meanest critter you ever saw.'"

"I'll see you."

"Men,' Tex says, 'Shimmy and Red and me are plain soldiers. We'll never be much. Shimmy and Red have got no stripes; I got one. Don't let that fool you. You'll become soldiers the day you learn how little rank means. You can learn from us, that's all you got to know. Only,' he says, 'you're cadets—you got to behave—'"

"OK, it's all yours. . . . Hell no, I'm not showing my cards."

"'When I hit Miami Beach,' Tex says, 'they told me I couldn't drink, I couldn't go into town and I couldn't go out with girls. Half an hour after taps, the first night, I was in a night club in Miami, with a barrel of beer on the table and a girl on each knee.

"'Men,' Tex says, 'it doesn't pay. It's too hot to drink, and in Miami it's 80 percent.'"

"I'll take two."

"That evening Tex took us out in an alley where no one could see us. He lined us up and gave us position of the soldier, and parade rest, and facing movements, by the numbers. Pretty soon he marched us off—stiff as pokers and self-conscious as hell. But he was proud of us even then—and we were proud, because of him, I guess.

"He was a swell guy. When we got our uniforms he spent the whole evening fixing our belts and ties and caps, and getting to know us. After the lectures he used to take us to get ice cream, and in the evenings we'd all go for a beer, down at Sam's Place."

"I'll see you."

"This'll show you how smart Tex was. One day, during break, the cadets start talking about flying . . ."

"Son of a gun, and I had three sevens!"

"'I reckon the real guy is the rear gunner,' says a dumb jerk called Big Stoop, who was getting wise to himself. Another guy says, 'Hell no; every time a bomber comes back, it comes back for more bombs, more gas and more rear gunners. They wash them out with a hose.' Then Swig—he was a joker—says, 'They say the average life of a pilot in combat is two minutes.'"

"You playing for a straight? You're crazy. . . . I'll take three."

"There was a real little fellow called Sparrow, looked like he was sixteen and never been away from home. Sparrow says, 'Christ, an awful lot of us have got to die so one can live!' Crazy kid."

"I'll raise you a nickel."

"I could see Tex was worried. He cut in real quick. 'I never learned mathematics,' he says, 'but how about some football?' Just like a monkey he shimmies up a palm tree and throws a cocoanut down. In half a second the boys are tearing in and out of the palm grove. I saw Tex smile . . . That's how smart he was."

"I'll see you—a straight! Two cards drawn on a three-card straight! I give up!"

"Sometimes Tex was rugged. He was really rugged the first day we went to the drill field. 'Get in ranks there! Dress it up! Thumbs in! Elbows locked! Six to the front and three to the rear!' He kept it up all the way down Collins Avenue. He shouted, 'Sound off!' a dozen times. You should have heard us! All the way down you could see old soldiers coming out and staring as we marched by. You could hear instructors muttering to those raunchy draftees, 'Look at them cadets; why can't you march like that?'"

"I'll take three."

"Boy, we hit the drill field singing the Air Corps song, with Tex crying, 'Chins up! Suck those guts in! Eyes straight ahead!' Then he said in a low voice what we'd been waiting for, 'Men, you're looking swell!' That was all we needed. We went past the colonel like a million bucks and really put on a show. Going back we sang all the way—mainly 'Alouette'—about Hedy Lamarr with hair on her legs and hair on her chest and hair"—

"Make it a dime."

"After chow that night Tex comes in and lays down on Swig's bed. We lay around on the floor. 'Men,' he says, 'it looks like my theory was right after all. The captain just told me the colonel said you were the best damn flight on the field today. He says you're going to carry the squadron colors in the parade.' Boy, how we cheered!"

"I'll stick."

"We had a real bull session that night. First we talked about sports, then about girls. Swig told how he'd loved his girl twice a week regular; just like they was married, he said. Then we talked about after the war. Some of the guys wanted to be test pilots; a couple wanted to stick to the army; Swig was going to be a cop. Then Tex says, 'I'm going back to my brother's farm near Sweetwater. Pretty soon I'll save enough to buy me a farm of my own. I'll get me a nigger and a mule, and I'll be happy. And if my son ever says he wants to be a soldier, I'll shoot him dead.'

"We were all set up that night. We thought what Tex said was kind of funny but we didn't say anything."

"I'll blow."

"The next morning we tore out when the whistle blew and lined up, real eager. Then Tex comes up and we can see something's wrong."

"'Men,' he says, 'I got bad news. The captain told me this flight is being broken up. You'll go to flight L down at the Fairmont. I couldn't do nothing about it,

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men. I told the captain, I'm all cut up. But there's nothing I can do.'

"We packed up feeling like hell. We left the old Nash and staggered down the street under our barracks bags, sweating like pigs.

"Flight L was a pack of rebels, gross as hell. The instructor was a sergeant and plenty tough. He handed it out, and when we got back from drill that night and lay down, we were ready to cry. Then the word goes round that Tex has got a room at Sam's and everything is set for a farewell party" . . .

"OK, boys, dealer's choice! Deuces and one eyes wild; jacks to open! Ante's a dime."

"That night, boy, we got plenty drunk. Swig sang some dirty songs, and then we all sang the old ones. We gave Tex a forty-dollar watch with his name on it. Boy, he was so drunk he cried."

"How many do you want?"

. ."Then Tex got up and made a speech. He said he was a no-good guy, he'd always drifted and he'd never met a bunch like us, and he wanted all our addresses, and we'd all got to write to him."

"How many?"

"And he'd never forget us even if we forgot him. All of a sudden this little guy Sparrow jumps up. He was really drunk. He sways around and damns the army and says if we're going to be screwed like this he doesn't want to fly."

"I'll raise you a dime. . . . I'll raise you another dime. . . . I'll see you. . . . Brother, your three kings can kiss my royal fanny; I got a straight from the seven."

"Then Tex gets sore—he gets up and says, 'You can't talk like that. You're soldiers, just like me, and eight million others. You know I'm broken up,' he says. 'I'm cut all to pieces. But men', he says, 'that's the army and you're soldiers. You never stay in one place in the army. You never take roots. You never keep the same friends. You'll move from place to place, and all of you, you'll be broken up and remade and broken up again. What you've been through you'll go through a hundred times, and worse in combat. The more you like a place, the harder it is to go. The better friends you make, the worse it'll be. You can't make close friends in war,' he says. 'You can't love too much, and yet in the army you got nothing else to live for. That's how war is and you've got to learn to take it before you become real soldiers.' "

"I'll blow."

"We didn't say anything. Then we got up and sang 'Auld Lang Syne.' We staggered out. Tex was worried that the MP's would pick us up. It was late.

"Outside it was a cold clear night. The moon was out, and all the stars. We staggered around and then Tex cried out, 'Flight L, fall in!' Just like the first time. We fell in, and marched off, perfect. 'Heads up! Guts in!' Tex was shouting. It was late and the streets were dark and silent. You could hear his voice ringing.

" 'Chins out! Eyes straight ahead!' he cried. 'Look proud, men! That's the way I want you to always look when you're marching. You're soldiers, remember that.'

"Down at the Fairmont we broke up and said so long. All the boys were sad. Sparrow was crying like a kid. It was way after taps, and we undressed in the dark. I was almost asleep when someone comes into the room and touches me. It was Swig. 'Get dressed,' he says. 'Tex is down at Sam's and he said for you and me to come back.' "

"We crept out, dodging the guards. At Sam's the soldiers were getting stewed; the waitresses were loving them up. There was so much smoke that for a while we couldn't see anything. Then we saw Tex and Shimmy at a table. We were going up when Swig motions me to stop.

"Tex was lying across the table. I never saw anyone so drunk. 'I'm through,' he was saying. 'Going crazy, by the numbers. I'm going to drink and drink and drink, and to hell with the captain. If he doesn't like it he knows what he can do.'

"Shimmy shakes him. 'Tex,' he says, 'sober up, you goddam fool. You know what you are,' he says. 'A goddam fool to let a bunch of raw kids break you up like this. They'll forget you inside in a month and in less than a week you'll pawn that watch to pay your rent.'

" 'Going crazy, by the numbers,' Tex says."

"I'll blow again; I got nothing."

" 'You goddam fool,' says Shimmy. He was tight too, and he kept shaking him. 'You're the best damn instructor on the beach and you're nothing but a lousy pfc. You drink too much.'

" 'By the numbers,' Tex says.

" 'You lousy pfc,' says Shimmy; he looked like he was about to cry too. 'You don't want to get drunk. You're broken up, and you want to get the hell out of here. You think if you get drunk enough the captain will put you up for a transfer. You're crazy! All he'll do is bust you back to private. He'd do it right now if he found you here. You're drunk!'

"Tex just lays there. Shimmy must have scared himself. He looked up and we turned around quick and got out. We stole back keeping in the shadows. It was cold. I was shivering, and Swig too."

"I'll take two."

"We worked hard in the new flight. The instructor was a sergeant, tough, but military. We didn't see Tex for a week. Then Swig says to me one evening, 'Tex is at Sam's, he's still drunk, and the watch is gone!' We were all disgusted with him after that. Sometimes we'd see him in the streets and he'd try to speak to us. He looked sort of—cheap.

"It was a funny thing, he seemed just like a stranger.

"Maybe we'd become soldiers, like Tex said."

MICHAEL STRAIGHT

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Washington Notes

Election Politics

PASSAGE of the anti-poll-tax bill will depend upon the strength and the will to fight of Republican Senators. It is doubtful whether they possess either in sufficient proportions to defeat the filibuster that is promised by their Democratic brethren from the South. The cards are stacked against majority rule. A majority of the members of the Senate would vote for the bill if the opportunity were presented. But all signs indicate that as of today the Southern minority has enough strength to prevent a vote.

In November, 1942, a similar bill was taken up in the Senate. It, too, had passed the House by a wide margin. Limitation of debate is the rule in the House; it is the exception in the Senate. The Senate filibusterers got down to business early. Bilbo of Mississippi, managed by the shrewd Tom Connally of Texas, reveled in the travesty upon representative government which he conducted. Finally a motion for cloture was put forward to limit debate. A two-thirds vote was necessary for passage, but the result was 37 Senators for cloture and 41 against.

Senators take great pride in their right to unfettered oratory. They do not like to vote cloture against a debate today for fear cloture may be voted against them tomorrow. Many who were for the anti-poll-tax bill were not for cloture. Unlimited debate still is the rule in the Senate.

If cloture had been adopted, the Southerners would not have been without ammunition. Every amendment offered would have been debatable. This time, the Southerners have already promised that they have a thousand amendments prepared. Two hours' debate on each amendment would keep the Senate in session all summer.

Sponsors of the anti-poll-tax bill have one thing in their favor today that they did not have in 1942. An election is just around the corner. When the bill was under consideration in 1942 an election was just behind. Republicans then, I thought, were not much interested in the bill. They did not take part in the debate to any considerable extent. Senator McNary, the late Republican leader, sat quiet while the Democrats fought and bled. He voted against cloture. Senator White, the new Republican leader, has said that he believes a majority of the 37 Republicans will vote for cloture. A majority won't do any good. It will take all of them and an almost equal number of Democrats to enforce limitation of debate. The Republicans have their eyes upon the coming primaries and upon the general election in November. It might be that the Negro vote will be decisive. If the Republicans show unity in the Senate fight ahead they could capture that vote. They know it. They will put up a better fight for the bill this year than they did in 1942.

If you must bet your money against Thomas E. Dewey as the Republican presidential nominee, the safest man to put it on is Senator Robert A. Taft of Ohio. He is still the darling of the old guard. He came within an inch of being nominated in 1940; he has considerable party support; he is absolutely safe; he is able. If the old guard is satisfied that the Wisconsin primary was another indication of a conservative trend it might have the courage to start a stop-Dewey movement. The old guard, apparently, has little more trust in the New York Governor than have New Dealers. But the old guard thinks now that it can win with Dewey.

I remember that famous night in Philadelphia when Wendell L. Willkie was nominated. With a dozen other reporters I was in his hotel room as the final ballots were taken. "Well," he said, "they said it was Taft I would have to beat."

The betting today is almost 100-to-1 in Washington that Dewey will be the Republican nominee. But he has a few obstacles to overcome. He is perhaps too far out in front for his own good. He believes that he must keep silent until the day he is nominated. When that day comes, his acceptance speech will have been written, mimeographed for the press, and will be ready for distribution. Dewey has served a good purpose in stopping Willkie, the old guard says. For that they will be everlastingly grateful. But they would not be above ditching him as they did in 1940 if they thought they could win with Taft or Bricker.

But today Dewey is riding high—mighty high.

The most revealing comment of the week was made by Senator Guy M. Gillette of Iowa, one of the men President Roosevelt attempted to defeat in 1938. The President now has given his blessing to Senator Gillette for a third term, but the Senator has not weakened in his opposition to a fourth term. The Iowan's choice for president is Secretary of State Hull. But he is very fond of Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia, one of the most effective anti-New Dealers. "While I have gone on record for Secretary Hull as my first choice," Senator Gillette said, "I would consider Senator Byrd a candidate whom any Democrat or any Republican would be proud to support."

The truth is that any old-line Democrat or any old-line Republican would be glad to support Senator Byrd. He is the Taft of the Democratic Party. If one party were liberal and the other conservative, Byrd would be in the conservative party. But we have two parties which are conservative. The Junior Senator from Virginia is welcome in either. Because of geography, he chose the Democratic Party. What better evidence do we have that the two old parties are years behind the times?

Not much news has come to Washington about the action that will be taken to nullify the Supreme Court's decision that Negroes have a right to vote in party primaries. The poll-tax and registration laws will prevent most Negroes from qualifying to vote in any 1944 primaries.

But more important than any legal restriction is the attitude of the powers that be. It would be a courageous Negro indeed who would apply for permission to vote in Mississippi or Alabama today. He might be asked to recite the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He might be held up to ridicule by white officials. He might be threatened with loss of his job. The Supreme Court's decision sounds hollow today; yet it sets the pattern for progress in the future, however slow that progress may be.

Washington T. R. B.

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Miss Irene Lewisohn

THE STORY of the Neighborhood Playhouse on Grand Street does not need recounting here. It was founded in 1915 by Miss Irene Lewisohn and her sister, Mrs. Alice Lewisohn Crowley. For years before it closed, more than a decade ago, and turned into the Neighborhood Playhouse School of the Theatre, the Neighborhood, above every other theatre or organization in New York, was the liberal and tireless center for experiments in new plays and new forms of theatre art. Dramatists not much known found an opening there. Dramas that were of too bold or too forward-looking a character, or that demanded a too complicated production, were given on this small stage. The Hebrew play of "The Dybbuk," for example, was done, and done with sincerity and admirable effect. The Hindu classic of "The Little Clay Cart" was carried through with taste and great lyric beauty. Before Broadway had heard much about them, Dunsany, James Joyce, Granville Barker, Galsworthy and many other coming reputations were to be seen at the Neighborhood Playhouse.

For many years this was the only theatre in all New York where a group of actors were being systematically trained throughout a genuine variety of roles and seasons. Nowhere else in New York could you say that actors were being discovered and being developed. (To the shame of many programs—at the Theatre Guild for instance—I have often seen the account of an actor's past leave out any mention of the Neighborhood Playhouse as the source of his training.) It was the only theatre in New York where performers could learn dancing, singing, décor, et cetera, could study the various elements that go to make up the theatre art. If the effect at times suggested the amateurish, it was largely because something was being done which on Broadway would not even have been attempted or, for the most part, desired at all.

To all this there were many contributors, a good number of them now among our leading theatre artists, and many a world-famous name has a connection with the Neighborhood Playhouse. We cannot take up here the long list of these or of the workers who shared in this organization. The people who made it all possible were the Misses Lewisohn. They made it possible financially and to a large extent spiritually.

Miss Irene Lewisohn was known in many fields, among them the Henry Street Settlement and the Museum of Costume Art, which she founded and was president of. But it was in relation to the Neighborhood Playhouse that she found the fullest and most characteristic expression. I knew her well there and have seen her in various circumstances, problems and situations. She was widely learned and to a considerable degree accomplished in divers kinds of artistic expression, all of which she approached in a spirit of humility, candor, glow and energy that was remarkable. She had the faculty of giving out, with great beauty of heart, the subtlest and yet firmest appreciation and understanding, so that her response and friendship, asking nothing for itself, was of marvelous benefit to the artist. Thinking of her, we are obliged to wonder, for the sake of the theatre and art, how many and where such people are going in times like ours to be found. Any such doubt, any such seeming pessimism, however, would have been the last thing to enter Miss Irene Lewisohn's mind; for she believed in the flower and fruit and blessing of all human life. To this wealth, generosity, culture, energy and faith, she added goodness, the kind of goodness that is the simple, final, beautiful form of the imagination.

STARK YOUNG

The Bandwagon

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, each of us is touched in some measure by the horror and the sadness of the war, and

WHEREAS, when we are under great strain and emotional stress, we must seek some form of escape from our troubled thoughts and find a medium of spiritual refreshment and mental relaxation so that we may more efficiently carry on with the necessary duties of our daily living and also take an active part in vital war effort, and

WHEREAS, the realm of fantasy provides such an escape from reality and is a wholesome, uplifting form of amusement,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bourke B. Hickenlooper, as Governor, hereby proclaim the week of April 6 through April 12, 1944, inclusive, as

SNOW WHITE WEEK

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Iowa to be affixed hereto. . . . B. B. HICKENLOOPER. – *From The Ames (Iowa) Daily Tribune.*

Democracy in Action, Legal Division

An ingenious suggestion . . . was made today that any party in any state would be on sound legal ground if it based exclusion from primaries on geographical origins instead of race or color, since nothing in the Constitution specifically bars a geographical requirement. For example, the Democratic State Convention of Texas would admit to its party primaries "all persons whose original American continental ancestors came from any part of the world except that section of Africa which lies between the latitudes of 30 North and 25 South." – *Arthur Krock in The New York Times.*

Representative Patton of Texas declared that the Southern white man is "the best friend the Negroes have," but was confident the Negroes did not want to vote in the white primaries. He had "an abiding faith in the great Democratic hordes of Texas" that they would not let them do so. – *From Chester Rowell's column in The San Francisco Chronicle.*

"The South at all costs will maintain the rule of white supremacy," Overton [Senator from Louisiana] said. "The Negro can be kept from the polls by educational qualification tests. This decision will add greatly to the difficulties of advocates of a fourth term in securing the support of the South." – *UP dispatch to The Knoxville, Tenn., News-Sentinel.*

On the Home Front

The corporation is headed by Edward G. Ball of Jacksonville, brother of Mrs. Alfred I. duPont and in charge of duPont interests in Florida. The corporation has threatened suit against the government if any patient at Ream Hospital [for wounded soldiers] gets more than three feet off the concrete walks around the hospital grounds. – *From The New York Times.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column; $1 will be paid for each item used. Address Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. Please enclose the original clipping. – THE EDITORS

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Correspondence

Postwar Millionaires

SIR: The inadequate taxation schedules which the present reactionary Congress saddled on us have a type of dynamite contained therein which has almost completely escaped the spotlight of publicity.

A few inklings of what is happening appear in the news reports of our present economic situation, but a legitimate analysis of the implications has always been sidestepped. Two of these intelligence flashes have been given to the public recently. First, it was noted that the Fourth War Loan Drive, while oversubscribed in total, was *very much undersubscribed* by the rank and file of Mr. John Q. Public, the small investor. Second, it has been noted that the stock market has been slowly but steadily advancing.

Now, what do these things means? They mean, first of all, that our very much talked about (and oftentimes abused) average man—and that means you, and you, and you, and me—is so tightly squeezed between rising costs of living and ceilinged wages that he has little if anything to put into *extra* war-bond purchases. It is the investor with more money than he knows what to do with (literally!) that is doing the investing.

But the big-money investors are not satisfied to tie down substantial holdings in 2.9-percent yields. The stock market now, as never before, is a place where excess money can be made exempt from future inflation. Who except those with swollen cash reserves can find large sums to earmark for protection against the possibility of a fall in the purchasing power of a dollar?

Every time a raid is made in the form of taxation favoring "the greedy" at the expense of "the needy," watch the stock market rise. And keep in mind that each time such a rise takes place it is indicative of falling dollar value—and each time this occurs our Mr. American Man is less and less able to find any money with which to buy war bonds.

One of the biggest hindrances to this wartime salting away of large sums was the ceiling of $67,000 on gross incomes. Naturally, then, it was necessary for *that* ceiling to be removed.

What pressure are *you* exerting on your congressmen to act as *your* representatives? Well, to quote a well known Sunday-night commentator, "*What are you waiting for?*"

Detroit, Mich. PHILIP CARPENTER

The Japanese American Citizens' League

SIR: In your issue of March 20, K. Takahashi takes exception to what he regards as a too favorable presentation of the restoration of the draft for Japanese Americans, covered in your correspondence columns by the acting national secretary of the Japanese American Citizens' League.

Though he deplores segregation and discrimination in the armed forces, he rather minimizes the fact that reopening the draft to Nisei gave them a deserved recognition long denied. While it is true that they do not serve on the same basis as white citizens, they are in the same boat with Negroes and other Orientals, also segregated. The racial discrimination is of course deplorable, as it affects them all, and pressure should be continuously brought on the War Department to change it.

Mr. Takahashi denies that the Japanese American Citizens' League is "the only organization of American citizens of Japanese descent working toward integration and assimilation." But the original claim was that it was the only *national* organization so doing, which is the fact. While there are differences among groups of Japanese Americans, the Citizens' League is by far the most representative and influential. It is the agency of the Japanese Americans with which the American Civil Liberties Union has worked in closest coöperation, and the one singled out for attack by reactionaries.

ROGER BALDWIN, Director,
New York City American Civil Liberties Union

News from Germany

SIR: Your readers may be interested in a recent letter from Germany, not censored.

Stockholm, Sweden S. R. G.

[ENCLOSURE]

I know that you are very anxious to hear from me after the last raid. Thanks to our "bunkers," which apparently are safer than most shelters in the other towns, we had comparatively fewer casualties. My house was damaged but not destroyed. Many people prefer to live among the ruins than to be lodged in the homes of strangers, who never welcome them. I am not so young as I used to be and my nerves are shattered. The day after the raid I tried to reach our old farm in the country which I leased out three years ago. The journey was a nightmare. The trains are so packed that you have to fight for hours to get in. The times of departure are not fixed and you never know when or where you arrive. I had to get out after an hour's journey because for some reason or other the route had to be changed. I walked over four hours on muddy roads in the rain till I reached X——. When at last I arrived, the tenant refused to let me stay in my own house. I tried to find a room or at least a bed on one of the farms in the neighborhood, but the peasants were so hostile that I dared not insist. They are fed up with town people, they say, who are always bothering them, and will not shelter us without strict orders from the SS. They are exasperated because their provisions were requisitioned for the homeless victims of the raids. Two young peasants threatened me with hand grenades. Some of my friends had similar experiences. I had to walk back to Bremen and now my shoes are in pieces. Can you send a pair of boots?

Don't expect a letter from me during the next months. According to a new decree, we must get a special permit from the police if we want to write to anybody abroad—even our own children. . . .

From The New Republic Mail Bag

C. N. Jacobs of St. Louis, Missouri, writes us about postwar planning. He says: "Were it not for the compelling influence of our national debt . . . it is conceivable that we could continue to grope our way as we have done in the past half-century," but that "whenever an economy becomes as lofty as ours now is and must remain, no liberties may be taken anywhere if the thing is not to topple." This resolves into the belief that "all thought of a return to rugged individualism and complete freedom of enterprise will be frowned upon as incompatible with our national security."

W. H. Archer of Pasadena, California, writes that "several of us here commend your cartel number [March 27] and urge you to keep this sinister issue in the spotlight of a courageous publicity, without ceasing."

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SELECTED POEMS
1923-1943

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Spring Book Number

In Defense of the 1920's

NO OTHER PERIOD in American literature has been denounced more vehemently and persistently than the 1920's. Not to mention the early attacks against "This Side of Paradise" in 1920 and against "Three Soldiers" in 1921, there were the professorial insults of the Humanists and, all through the depression, the continued jeers of the proletarian critics. These were followed, after the beginning of the Second World War, by the exhortations of MacLeish as a reformed poet lecturing his comrades in sin, and by the anathemas of Van Wyck Brooks, who spoke as a moralist deeply concerned for the future of literature and his country; both were threatened, he believed, by roving bands of unrepentant writers. Still other voices joined in. The attacks were made by men of different literary and political faiths, who invoked a mixture of conservative, radical, reactionary and liberal-democratic standards; but in general they brought forward the same charges: that the literature of the 1920's was superficial, immoral, negative, and had failed to depict the healthier side of American life.

Bernard DeVoto restates and magnifies these accusations. In his new book, "The Literary Fallacy,"[1] he asserts that the authors of the 1920's were "ignorant, inaccurate or foolish—or frivolous or corrupt." They completely misunderstood the society of their time—which, he says, "was rugged, lively and vital; but literature became increasingly debilitated, capricious, querulous and irrelevant." And DeVoto ends by saying:

> Never in any country or any age had writers so misrepresented their culture, never had they been so unanimously wrong. Never had writers been so completely separated from the experiences that alone give life and validity to literature. And therefore, because separation from the sources of life makes despair, never had literature been so despairing, and because false writing makes trivial writing, never had literature been so trivial. . . . Seeking for a phrase which will convey the quality of that literature, history may sum it up as the Age of Ignominy.

But you wonder, reading his book, how it came about that such an ignorant, foolish, debilitated, querulous, trivial and utterly ignominious literature has managed to survive this series of attacks. Why do young writers still imitate Wolfe or Crane or Fitzgerald, in preference to Willa Cather and Robert Frost? Why do flyers back from New Guinea and Australian war correspondents in the Middle East write novels in Hemingway's early manner? Might it be that the continuing attacks against these writers are another testimony to their life and power? Even Bernard DeVoto, who belabors them from any convenient angle; who is now a sociological critic, now a wise anthropologist, now a historian, now a moralist, now (briefly and inadvertently) an esthetician, now radical, now conservative, now speaking in behalf of the American scholar and now rallying the crowd against him—even DeVoto proclaims the vigor and art of these writers by his need to use all weapons against them.

In his attacks, he is not always careful to preserve the appearance of consistency and fairness. Thus, he indicts "The Flowering of New England" and "New England: Indian Summer" on two principal counts: that they fail to consider national affairs or the opening of the frontier, and that they neglect economic trends "in showing us the delicacies of minds absorbed in the fascinating task of writing books." Forgetting that the two works together were planned as a literary history of New England, he insists on judging them as a social and cultural history of the nation at large. In his second chapter, he condemns writers for their careless use of the word "fascist." "Except in a small number of cases," he says, and with good reason, " . . . the epithet 'fascist' applied by writers to one another has meant one or the other of two things. It has meant either 'I disagree with him' or 'He does not like my books.' " In his fourth chapter, however, he forgets this wise observation in his rage at Hemingway. "From the beginning up to now," he says, "both implicitly and explicitly, with a vindictive belligerence, Mr. Hemingway has always attacked the life of the mind, the life of the spirit and the shared social experience of mankind. . . . It is a short step from thinking of the mob to thinking of the wolf pack, from the praise of instinct to war against reason, from art's vision of man as contemptible to dictatorship's vision of men as slaves." In other words, Hemingway is a short step from being a fascist. Either DeVoto disagrees with him or he doesn't like DeVoto's books.

A graver fault than this unfairness or inconsistency—of which I could give many other examples—is the author's failure to define his subject strictly in his own mind. He says that his book is an examination, "reasonably detailed but far from complete, of certain ideas, dogmas and conclusions which appear and reappear in much American literature of the 1920's, particularly in the work of writers who were then widely held to be most characteristic of the time and most expressive of its spirit." Elsewhere he mentions these writers by name: they are H. L. Mencken (born in 1880), Sinclair Lewis (1885), Ernest Hemingway (1898), John Dos Passos (1896), William Faulkner (1897), Thomas Wolfe (1900), T. S. Eliot (1888) and Van Wyck Brooks (1886). Most of these men belonged to one of two different categories. Either they were the writers who *dominated* the 1920's (along with Dreiser, Anderson, Cabell and Hergesheimer) or else they were the men who *appeared* in the 1920's, existed as a group in opposition to the dominant trends and did their best work in the following decade. Brooks was the one exception. He detested the 1920's and, for a time, he wrote nothing whatever; all his best work was done before and after the period that DeVoto claims to be treating. When he collects the faults of two hostile generations while neglecting their virtues, the result is an interesting amalgam

[1] The Literary Fallacy, by Bernard DeVoto. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 175 pages. $2.50.

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of literary crimes, but it bears little resemblance to what actually happened in American letters.

The principal crime of which DeVoto accuses both generations together is that of indulging in what he calls "the literary fallacy." This he defines as, "essentially, the belief that literature is the measure of culture." But in that case, why confine himself to the 1920's, considering that writers of all ages have held a similar belief? And why confine himself to literature? There is also an agricultural fallacy, which consists in believing that agriculture is the measure of culture. There is a plumbing fallacy: that bathrooms are the measure of culture. At all times men have sought to glorify their own professions; you might almost call it the human fallacy. It is a pardonable failing, and it causes less damage than might be expected, considering that human culture is a unity, something that can be approached and penetrated from almost any angle; men often start from such different fields as fiction, agriculture, science and even plumbing to reach the same truths about life as a whole. There is also a critic's fallacy, however, and it is somewhat less innocent than the others we have mentioned. It consists in projecting an imaginary purpose for works of literature, quite different from the actual purposes of their authors, and then condemning the authors jointly and separately because they failed to achieve it. DeVoto writes as if to illustrate that fallacy. He takes for granted that the authors of the 1920's should all have been cultural historians and should all have depicted American civilization as DeVoto now sees it; then he charges them with offering only a false or fragmentary picture. Quoting Emerson, he orders them back from their special interests to "the meal in the firkin, the milk in the pan."

But when I came to reread "The American Scholar," I found that Emerson's words had a different application from the one that DeVoto was trying to give them. They were a plea, not for writing great treatises on American civilization based on years of study in the library, but rather for understanding our immediate surroundings. "What would we really know the meaning of?" Emerson asked. "The meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan; the ballad in the street; the news of the boat; the glance of the eye; the form and gait of the body; show me the ultimate reason of these matters . . . and the world lies no longer a dull miscellany and lumber-room, but has form and order; there is no trifle, there is no puzzle, but one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench." He was saying almost what Hemingway said at the end of "Death in the Afternoon": Let those who want to [do so] change the world, if you can get to see it clear and as a whole. Then any part you make will represent the whole if it's truly made." There is no sign in this quotation—although there are a few signs elsewhere—of the violent anti-intellectualism that DeVoto imputes to Hemingway. There is every sign of an intellectual purpose he shared with other members of his generation: to deal only with the parts of the world they knew best, in the conviction that those parts would reveal the whole world. They hated eloquence, even of Emerson's homely sort; but instinctively they agreed with him that "one design unites and animates the farthest pinnacle and the lowest trench."

Hemingway, for example, didn't write about America the Vastly Beautiful, as DeVoto would have liked him to do; he wrote about the Michigan woods, about Paris cafés and fighting on the Isonzo and bull-fights in Spain; these were his meal in the firkin and his milk in the pan. Faulkner wrote about a single Mississippi county in book after book dealing with hundreds of different characters; by now he has composed what is our nearest approach to a *comédie humaine*. Fitzgerald wrote about his wealthy neighbors on Long Island and the Riviera, investing them with a false glamor and carefully explaining its falsity. Wolfe wrote badly at times, worse than any other American author of distinction, but he also gave us the poetry of the adolescent who feels infinite possibilities in himself and sets out from a back-country town to conquer the world—or rather, his part of the world. All these authors wrote about parts of the world; Dos Passos and Hart Crane were the only exceptions, the only men of their generation who tried to deal with America as a whole. Crane's attempt was a failure—as a whole; but he is marvelous in his treatment of specific scenes: the Brooklyn Bridge, the subways, the Mississippi. Dos Passos wrote from the special view of the traveler, the man who continually meets new people, hears their stories briefly, and travels on. That too was a part of the world: a cross-section taken horizontally rather than in depth.

The parts of America that appear in their novels and poems are not in general the smiling parts, the broad farmlands, the big Sunday dinners after coming home from church, the bouncing optimism that Mr. DeVoto finds everywhere. As a matter of fact, these authors were rebelling against another picture of American life that was dominant and accepted, that was preached in the churches, proclaimed at Rotary luncheons and romanticized by The Saturday Evening Post. Nobody was misled by them at the time they were writing: if anybody wanted the antidote to Dos Passos, let us say, he could find it in every magazine at his dentist's office and almost every novel in the loan library at the corner drugstore. But a curious thing has happened in the intervening years. The orthodox, optimistic, forward-looking literature of the 1920's has disappeared so completely that DeVoto doesn't even remember it. The literature of the rebels and renegades has survived and has come to be taken as a complete picture of the period. It had the strength to live.

Today it is time for us to see these authors in perspective, with their great faults—which are not always the faults DeVoto imputes to them—set beside their greater virtues; their lack of broad vision set beside their power in depicting what was close at hand; their injustice to certain phases of American life set beside their emotional depth and lyricism. It is much too soon to assign them their separate ranks, and I should greatly question whether any of them will ever be placed on the same level as Emerson or Thoreau or Melville; yet together (and with a dozen contemporaries almost equally gifted) they represent a great period in American letters, the greatest since Concord in the 1850's. To them and to their critics I would apply what Gide said recently about Victor Hugo, after mentioning his faults one after another: "But instead of demanding qualities from people that we could easily find elsewhere, should we not take them for what they are: the titans for titans, the dwarfs for dwarfs, and the pedants who attack Hugo for fools?"

MALCOLM COWLEY

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Basic and After

The Loom of Language, by Frederick Bodmer. New York: W. W. Norton and Company. 692 pages. $3.75.

THE LOOM OF LANGUAGE is at least three books in one. In the first 200 or so pages, the author surveys "the natural history of language," tracing the development of the alphabet, analyzing inflection and syntax, and ending with "the classification of languages." The next 200 or so pages comprise a book for anyone who would piece together, with Mr. Bodmer's shrewd assistance, a working knowledge of German, Swedish, Dutch, Danish, Norwegian, French, Spanish, Italian or Portuguese. There are basic word lists in a copious index—and grammar is studied with an eye for the acquiring of maximum expressiveness with a minimum of resources. This section could also be read purely for the light it throws upon language in general and English in particular, thanks to the author's stress upon linguistic evolution and to his array of comparisons and contrasts between English and other languages, living and dead, primitive and civilized.

A "third book" considers "the world language problem." Here Mr. Bodmer reviews the history of language planning; and on the basis of what he has been saying about the trends and "diseases" of language, he sets down principles which he thinks should be embodied in the ideal international auxiliary language.

All told, it is an engrossing book, a mature and complex approach to the problems of linguistic simplification. Mr. Bodmer is an excellent curator of his "language museum"—and be your interests in language philological, literary or purely practical, you should find many things here to arrest your attention.

After following the author's many tributes to the virtues of English grammar, along with his unfavorable treatment of Esperanto and similar projects, we were agreeably surprised to find that he does not plump for Basic English, or for any of the competing brands of simplified English. As he sums up the matter:

> If advocates of constructed languages have been peculiarly blind to the *intrinsic* merits of Anglo-American, those who champion its claims as a world-auxiliary have been equally deaf to its *extrinsic* disabilities. Though Anglo-American is not a national language, it is not a politically neutral language. If a victorious alliance of the English-speaking people attempts to make it the official medium of a united Europe, its use will make the British nation a *Herrenwolk*. It will perpetuate all the discords which arise when one speech community enjoys a privileged position in the cultural and social life of a larger group. There is only one basis of equality on which nations can coöperate in a peaceful world order without the frictions which arise from linguistic differences. A new European order, or a new world order in which no nation enjoys favored treatment, will be one in which every citizen is bilingual, as Welsh or South African children are brought up to be bilingual. The common language of European or world citizenship must be the birthright of everyone, because the birthright of no one.

This seems like a fair statement of the case. Basic English is unquestionably a work of genius—and throughout this book one can discern its salutary influence upon Mr. Bodmer's thinking. There is even a genuine sense of style and poetry in the skill with which Basic has stripped itself of all stylistic and poetic vanities. But the mere fact that it has in effect taken a linguistic vow of poverty is no guarantee against imperialist invitations to cash in on it. At the very least, those who believe in the advantages of English structure, as such, should be willing to *rationally distort* it, for the purpose of getting these advantages to the fullest, with total regularity and efficiency. But in the interest of Anglo-American susceptibilities, Basic even imposes upon foreigners something so thoroughly unscientific as a large batch of idioms, plus many other kinds of exception and irregularity that are preserved not on their merits but purely as a concession to custom.

Regrettably, the author's own suggestions are confined to the realm of "principles," though we are told in a footnote that his editor, Lancelot Hogben, has attempted to embody them concretely in a language project. Primarily Mr. Bodmer favors a language that would be like a simplified and regularized English in grammatical structure. And its vocabulary would exploit to the fullest the Greek and Latin roots (especially the Greek roots) which the compound words of modern science and technology are making known throughout the world: the roots in such words as microscope, telephone, anthropology, hydrodynamics, chromosome. (A well selected list of these roots is also appended.)

The author states quite saliently his grounds for preferring "analytical" or "isolating" languages (like English and Chinese) as his structural model:

> The complete Sanskrit verb finite, that is the verb without its infinitives, participles and verbal adjectives plus their flexions, has 743 different forms, as against 268 of Greek. From a complete Greek verb we get the enormous number of 507 forms, from a Latin one 143, and from a Gothic verb 94. The English verb usually has four, or at most five forms (*e.g., give, gives, gave, giving, given*). If we add seven forms of *to be*, four of *to have*, together with *shall* or *will* and *should* or *would*, for construction of compound tenses, we can express with twenty words everything for which Sanskrit burdens the memory with nearly forty times as many vocables.

In a completely analytic language, every word would have but one form (as we say "I *must*, you *must*, he *must*," and "*must* list"). As a noun, the word would be the same in singular and plural, like *grouse*—and the possessive form would be periphrastic, as French would say "the hat of John," instead of "John's hat," thereby avoiding the flexional apostrophe-*s*. Latin synthetically says *amavi*, but English would break this into an analytic equivalent, "I have loved"—and to make the isolating process complete, we should also drop the flexional *d* of *loved*. Grammatical function is analytically revealed by a word's *position* rather than by its *form*.

"With the possible exception of a plural terminal," Mr. Bodmer's ideal interlanguage "would have no flexional modifications of word form." Thus, it would be almost totally of the isolating type. Discussing the fact that earlier planned languages, such as Volapük and Esperanto, are flexional, he says:

> Nineteenth-century linguists made the same assumptions as nineteenth-century biologists. They took for granted that what exists necessarily has a use. Awareness of the universal drift

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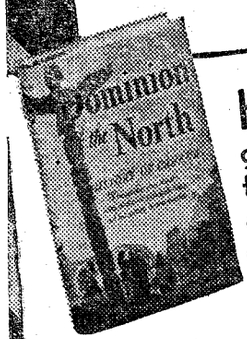

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Dominion of the North

BY DONALD GRANT CREIGHTON

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from flexional luxuriance toward analytical simplicity in the history of Aryan languages was not yet part of their intellectual equipment.

One may question whether a judgment made on the basis of a "universal drift" is in itself any more reliable than a judgment based on "that which exists." One might even accuse Mr. Bodmer of being "linguistically romantic" in his assumption that the ideal world language must try to go the "universal drift" one better.

One can even imagine an irony of this sort: Suppose there were no flexional languages for Zamenhof to have used for a model for his Esperanto. And suppose that some language planner were trying to invent the ideal language. He found himself confronted with the problems of rigid word order which a purely positional language brings to the fore. And he found that an isolating language like English makes for combinations of consonants (like the *t-s-n* of "it's not") that are awful mouthfuls for people of other linguistic habits. Then imagine that he of a sudden hit upon an idea. He could relieve these burdens in a flash, by introducing a few flexions, for instance the use of *-o* as an ending for nouns, of *-e* as an ending for modifiers, of *-i* as an ending for verbs. Wouldn't we hail his simple device as a startling bit of linguistic genius? But as things stand, when he is considered in terms of the "universal drift" away from flexion, he can be dismissed as a has-been.

KENNETH BURKE

A Poet as Critic

The Shield of Achilles: Essays on Beliefs in Poetry, by Horace Gregory. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company. 211 pages. $2.50.

DURING A DECADE which has witnessed a symptomatic decline in the amount and quality of serious reviewing in the book sections of the larger papers, Horace Gregory's discussions of poetry have persisted as a thoughtful exception. He has brought to them a poet's ability to discern the imaginative energy in other poets, and a trained and catholic taste that spans from Lucretius to D. H. Lawrence. Among our few poet-critics who now undertake such work only Conrad Aiken's recent reviews have been more unfailingly rewarding.

Yet the price paid for the occasional nature of Gregory's work is to be read in this collection. It is not properly a book, but rather the tantalizing beginnings of three books, any one of which could have been a more substantial contribution. First there is the book promised by the subtitle and best fulfilled by the opening and concluding essays, on Dr. Johnson and Paul Elmer More. As a judicious Latinist, Gregory can appreciate the full value of "The Vanity of Human Wishes." Indeed, he has recently declared, in the introduction to "The Triumph of Life," his anthology of elegiac poems, that Johnson's poem, along with "The Song of David" and "The Wreck of the Deutschland," "are among the major works of devotional verse in English." Such a statement suggests the range of connotations that Gregory brings to his explicit concern with moral attitudes in literature. He has escaped from our contemporary self-consciousness about ethical terms, and can write eloquently of poetry's "power of consolation." He shares in the recent admiration for the metaphysical poets, but his own taste is for a purer devotional strain than Donne's. He writes at his best when affirming the integral connections between intelligence and the moral sense in the profoundest poetry. The reader can only wish that he had written more on this difficult subject—which is usually handled intemperately or ineptly—that he had taken space to make more explicit the grounds of his admiration for, say, Wordsworth and Hardy and Robinson. As it is, the chief companion piece to his opening discourse is his comparative estimate of Johnson and More. The contrast shows the modern moralist to have been less robustly in contact with mankind, more literary and less humanized in his humanism. Yet Gregory is bent upon resuscitating the best strain in "The Shelburne Essays," the strain that expresses itself, for instance, in "The Solitude of Nathaniel Hawthorne" and in "Nemesis, or the Divine Envy," through the latter of which, as Gregory remarks, "the instruction, *Think as a mortal*, runs as an obbligato."

Gregory's second beginning for a book is not unrelated to his first, though demanding a somewhat different orientation. This might have been a critical history of the elegy, for which the compilation of his anthology had prepared him. It is interesting that he chose there more poems from Landor than from any other poet; and his most penetrating essay here is the one wherein he demonstrates Landor's prime importance in the sustained revival of the elegiac note. Perhaps that was the deepest cause for Yeats's finding himself, "at journey's end," with Landor as well as with Donne. For, as Gregory knows, our recent concern with the elegy has been no mere literary fashion. It has expressed the accruing concern of an age which for the past thirty years has hardly ever been far away from the "imminent shadow of death."

Again the author has said far less than he has the equipment for. The third chief grouping of his essays takes its departure from his informed realization that much still remains to be done in general criticism in discriminating between romanticisms. He writes freshly about John Clare's kind of nature description, and its deliberate contrast with that of Keats. But he opens his most fertile vein in this period by discussing Beddoes' efforts, in "Death's Jest Book," to recreate "the Gothic myth." He then proceeds to make a challenging linkage with Poe's quite independent handling of similar materials, and ends with the compelling statement that such power to reawaken the macabre images of the Gothic heritage "has its own force today," since, "in Poe's words, the death that looks gigantically down, stares with peculiar intensity upon the map of twentieth-century Europe."

It may be captious to make any strictures against a volume that contains so many leads for further thought. But sandwiched in among the essays I have cited are others that have no relation to the subtitle, and still others that bear the mark of obvious hackwork. The total effect is not the solid impact of Achilles' shield, the single impact of constructed wholeness.

F. O. MATTHIESSEN

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The Flower in the Desert

García Lorca, by Edwin Honig. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions. 218 pages. $1.50.

WE WERE TALKING about García Lorca the other night, prompted by this excellent book, and we arrived at certain fairly unanimous judgments.

"Well, then. While his reputation has declined, it was formerly inflated because of political excitements. But he is, after Antonio Machado, the best of modern Spanish poets." I said this with absolute confidence in the superiority of Machado. Had Ruben Darío and Pablo Neruda been Spaniards, the judgment would merely have been more complicated.

"The 'Gypsy Song Book'?" another said, as if putting a coin on the table for inspection. He was a good poet himself, a classical scholar with a lively pleasure in his latinity and a competent translator of Spanish verse, including Lorca's.

"And the 'Poem of the Deep Song' and the 'Lament'. In all these feeling and imagination are one. But *not* the plays," I continued.

"Ah," said the poet, nodding agreement. Then a cunning woman, who writes mysteries and children's books, put in the difficult question: "And the 'Poet in New York'?"

"No," I answered at last. "I once thought those poems deep; nowadays I think them chiefly obscure, with more than a little banality. Their imagery is less fertile, and as verse they have less music or less beauty of language. As logic they lack the sense of necessity. They are not rigorous." The discussion that at once broke out was well served by Mr. Honig's book. I think we arrived at some sort of agreement.

I quote these judgments only because at a much larger gathering a few nights later I found that much the same views were held. Mr. Honig, who is far more familiar with the poet's work than I am, will disagree. For him, "Bodas de Sangre" ("Blood Wedding") and "Yerma" are of a stature commensurate with the best of Lorca's verse. He says, finely, "there is nothing in Lorca's poetry which does not suggest dramatic projection." It is itself a projection. Lorca's poetry is not one of immobile moods, but of a vivid procession of images that dislocate one's mental routines. But I cannot accept the author's assertion that in the plays "there is no situation or theme which does not emerge through the poetic imagination." In the first place there are at least three levels or types of poetic imagination in Lorca and the plays are not rigorous in their selection of level. In them necessities which should be grim and bare, sometimes emerge whimsy-whamsied over with refulgent and girlish moons and peasant sexual symbols tricked out with tambourine bells.

I am referring to Act III, Scene 1, of "Blood Wedding" and the last scene of "Yerma," about both of which Mr. Honig writes very well indeed. "Yerma" is difficult for me, I confess. For one who has lived long with Spanish farmers, the play is too artificial in its premises and devices. I mean that Juan, who has to be the kind of man he is for the play to proceed as it does, is a quite impossible character. He does not stand up as a credible Spanish peasant nor as a primitive symbol. He must represent not merely infertility, but an indifference to fertility, which is not merely unlikely but impossible in a Spanish farmer, to whom a woman is a co-begetter of sons and daughters who will carry on the tilling of his land.

Mr. Honig may say that I am here bringing in a type of criticism that has no place in a discussion of such an art as Lorca's. My reply is that if the play is a folk drama, then it must accept the logic of the folk. Mr. Honig says, with exact recognition of the play's logic, "In any other context, the murder [of Juan by Yerma] would be highly grotesque, if not incomprehensible." But Juan, who is said to be a vigorous farmer, does not want children; he merely loves Yerma, who cannot be comforted by such an irresponsible love. This is too much of a special construction for me. It has no final logic. And so the play must borrow compulsions. If the murder "were not a compulsion rising from a free identification with the land, the whole meaning of the drama would be lost," Mr. Honig writes. Nowadays most of us are less impressed with these mystical rootings of the soul in the soil. In any case, that "free identification" cannot be established by the device Lorca adopts in the scene I reject. Yerma is watching a popular masque performed at a mountain shrine. In this masque one dancer represents "a vigorous male," carrying a bull's horn in each hand, while the other represents "a fertile woman" and carries a collar of bells. "These characters should not be made to seem in the least grotesque, but of great beauty, as products of the pure earth," Lorca directs. Unless they *do* seems to be emanations of the earth, expressions of the controlling logic of existence, then the conclusion of the play is invalid. For me it is invalid. The murder of Juan is not inevitable.

The Lorcan drama is an art of admixture. One can see it in the texture and in the broken-off fragment. Juan suspects Yerma of adultery. "Take me nude," replies the innocent wife. "Stand me in the middle of the street and spit on me. Do with me what you wish, for I am your wife, but be careful not to insinuate another man's name between my breasts." What an impossible, petty-middle-class, urban intellectual the woman was—half-masculine, slightly decadent and very exhibitionistic as well! And when she cries:

> When I ask a child of my suffering and the wind
> Offers me dahlias from a sleeping moon

she indicates why what should be slow, remorseless, logical and almost impersonal, is nervous and entirely personal. For "dahlias from a sleeping moon," is not merely a Granadine intellectual's image, but it is the image of one who was far more under the influence of non-Spanish, or at least international, tendencies than Mr. Honig acknowledges. This infertile peasant woman has pondered over Dali and read Mallarmé. She has agonized a little over André Breton, one suspects.

I begin to believe that "Blood Wedding" and "Yerma" did not spring from anything very profound and permanent in Lorca. In them he was searching, I feel, for elemental force and for passion, when his beauty lay in warmth and fantasy. His sympathy for the oppressed and ingenious gypsies was warm. It was Granadine, which means flaring

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and decadently acute and fantastic, sensitive, musical and overabundant. It means that its ultimate monotony is concealed by its profusion of imagery.

The contemporary mind has traveled on since those days and we are hungering for a more substantial art. But it was a valid stop. We were walking across an alkaline desert and Lorca and his brothers led us to an oasis that none had discovered, though it was always in rumor. And like the desert Arabians, who so much love their scarce flowers and their rare green places that their art endlessly repeats the small beauties in fantastically complex pattern (the momentary flower in the hard enduring tile), we gave ourselves up to the praise of oases. And oases are beautiful. Most certainly the fantastic near-surrealist art of the Granadine Lorca will always delight us, even if later on we come upon rich veils and broadly sliding streams, or if we return to the austere lands of Machado. It will always be good to revisit those fantastic glimpses of the moon, especially if we are to be shut away in darkness.

One is grateful to Mr. Honig for his book. It is not the last word on García Lorca, but it is a vigorous and keen-tempered approach. In it things are sometimes so well said that one puts the book down for a moment to let a remark work upon one's appreciation of the poet. In particular, the last chapter, "Image into Action," is fine and suggestive. His choice of extracts, too, is good, while the translations are luminous and secure.

RALPH BATES

A Man of Substance

Chronicle of Dawn, by Ramón J. Sender. New York: Doubleday, Doran and Company. 201 pages. $2.50.

JOSÉ GARCÉS was an officer in the Spanish Loyalist army who escaped to France before the final collapse of the Republicans and was interned in a concentration camp. While Madrid and Valencia held out, his hope held out; he continued to study engineering, and would say, "they are resisting in the Center, and one day we shall be sent for." When it was all over with the Loyalists he threw his engineering manual into the sea. There was nothing left to live for; it had been a war to the finish and the vanquished must pay. Garcés resisted all his friends' attempts to obtain his release. He threatened to use his liberty only for the purpose of surrendering himself to the Fascists. Death was the only worthy door by which he might leave the camp. And he left by the door worthy of him, but not before he had written down his recollections of his life.

It is by this device (which is not really a device at all, but a measure of honest necessity) that Ramón Sender sets down the adventures and mishaps of a young boy, presumably himself, his first love, his conflicts with his father, his fledgling egotism. Like all childhood narratives which gain their point by drawing away from the present, "Chronicle of Dawn" achieves an idyllic effect. The recorded episodes by themselves—whippings administered by a righteous father, scrapes with the neighbors and with his girl Valentina's father, gang fights bordering on delinquency, getting lost in an underground gallery lined with tombs and torture chambers—are almost as much reason for calling this an unhappy, as a happy, childhood. But it is the tone in which remembered experience is set down and the purpose these scenes serve which give "Chronicle of Dawn" its quality of delight. It is the prisoner Garcés' last possession and Sender's own refreshment. At the heart of his story is the theme of early love. And it is this—even more than the beauty and objectivity he achieves—which gives this book its extraordinary poignancy, as if death's own memoir were simply a love story.

After reading "Dark Wedding" and a recent short story, "The Eagle," which appeared in Partisan Review, I was particularly struck by the renewed ease with which Sender handles symbolism in the present book. His symbolism appeared to be getting out of hand, even at times symbolizing nothing so much as itself in an iconography run riot, religious in its overtones but wary of the reality to which it owed some final commitment. "Chronicle of Dawn" is to my mind a very welcome reconstruction of the symbol. Sender here uses narrative itself as a symbol—which, after all, is its natural function in the generic sense, as distinct from the particular genres in which men write.

For narrative itself is the supreme symbol in "Chronicle of Dawn." Else why should a man like Garcés, crushed, hopeless, at his life's end, cling to the narration of his life? It is, as he says, a means of making himself "a man of substance." Garcés has a right to this remnant of faith, just as he has a right to his otherwise complete hopelessness and to his condemnation of the victors (and the neutrals) of the Spanish war, of whom he says:

> . . . the generation now in power everywhere is a corrupt generation, a generation of liars. Few of us will live until the succeeding generation, our generation, takes command of things. . . . But even if we live, it is not certain that the rising generation is not contaminated. It seems that to reach the level of power, you have to lose everything first.

Garcés' reconstruction of his childhood is therefore not an escape from political responsibility, nor even a simple flight from hopelessness. It is, rather, a justification of the hopeless. The vanquished must be willing to pay with their lives. It is hence their duty to admit defeat; to find solace in half-measures, in catch-penny, penny-caught optimism, is in fact the greatest betrayal of the ideal. Only through the reconstruction of the times and experiences in which the ideal had meaning—the childhood of hope—can one examine, with the most unsparing honesty, the significance of the ideal, and know, without delusion, precisely what was lost when "all was lost." A research in lost life is the artist's counterpart for semantics, which goes looking for lost words in reconstructing the ideal. Sender would find himself; and if the source is intact only in memory, so much the better for memory.

"Chronicle of Dawn" is in many ways the coming full circle for Sender. In his first novel, "Pro Patria," the hero, Viance, is left, "his life entering infinity," precisely where Pepe Garcés must now begin. Viance had survived years of poverty in his native country and the slaughter of the disastrous Moroccan campaign. He returned to Spain to find his very village washed away, buried under fifty feet of water. This was the last blow for him, but not for the rest of his generation, who outlived their first undoing at the hands of the state by recognizing the enemy and joining the revolution. But what remained for them after the

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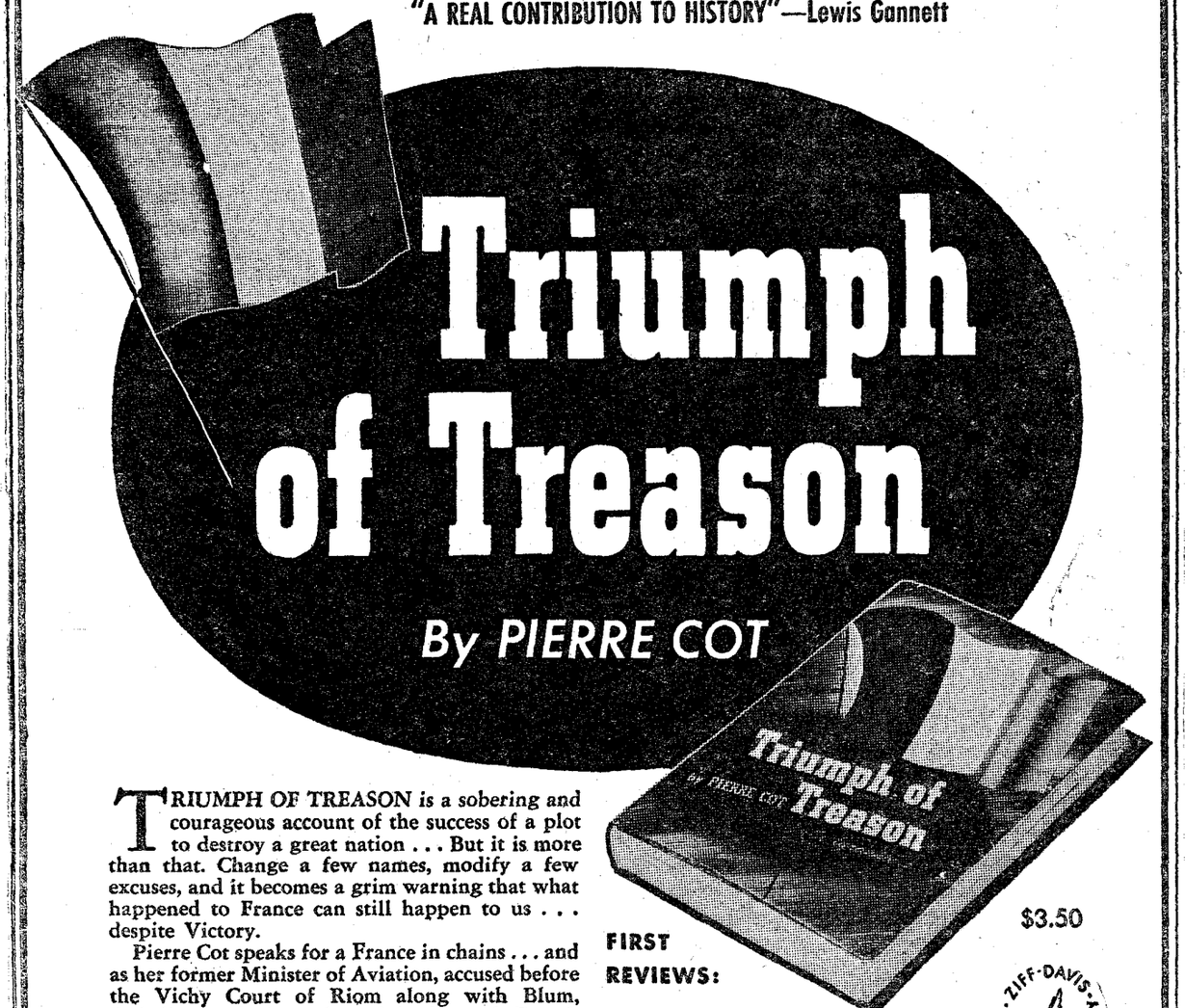

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triumph of the fascists? In "Dark Wedding" Sender examined the possibilities of a pure idealism which must consider all revolutions well lost, for the realization of the ideal necessarily entails its destruction. But I believe he has now undertaken a rewriting of idealism, transferring it back, just as his symbolism has shifted, to the development of the ego, where it may, perhaps, be justified again. Many writers today in search of a belief broader and more reliable than politics, regard this as their only alternative: to go forward by going back into themselves. And even if this is not the only means for making themselves "men of substance," still they will have found a means. And if this be to die, then "to die is different from what anyone supposed, and luckier." ISAAC ROSENFELD

Recent Latin American Novels

The Bay of Silence, by Eduardo Mallea. Translated by Stuart E. Grummon. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 339 pages. $2.50.
Sunburst, by Mauricio Magdaleno. Translated by Anita Brenner. New York: The Viking Press. 290 pages. $2.50.
Our Daily Bread, by Enrique Gil Gilbert. Translated by Dudley Poore. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 246 pages. $2.50.
The Horse and His Shadow, by Enrique Amorim. Translated by Lt. Richard L. O'Connell and James Graham Luján. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 252 pages. $2.50.
The Golden Serpent, by Ciro Alegría. Translated by Harriet de Onis. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 242 pages. $2.
Canapé-Vert, by Pierre Marcelin and Philippe Thoby-Marcelin. Translated by Edward Laroque Tinker. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 225 pages. $2.50.

IT IS NO EASY MATTER to accept the responsibility of trying to say something illuminating and at the same time gracious about such books as these. Here they are, lumped together, six recent novels about different places in Latin America. The fact of place is the most important thing about them. In English, French, and even in American novels, we can expect novels of character, or the conflict of emotion with a geographical background presupposed. In Latin America the background is always to the fore. And, for better or worse, we read these books, not on account of situations or characters which inhabit them, but for whatever they tell us about the various places where they were written.

Reading them, we are also forced to suspend purely literary standards. Absolute literary criteria simply do not apply. Instead, if we look at them historically, from an economic attitude, we can deduce from them a good deal about the culture of the given colonial state, its dependence on Europe, its chances for an early independent contribution.

It was not exactly fair to have translated all of them. There are two main classes of provincial art—the exportable, and that which has a purely local importance. That importance is frequently very intense. In almost every Latin American country there have been poems and novels which have had a tremendous immediate significance in focusing ideas and movements, but in translation—even in good translation—they must seem to us weak and jejune. These are the novels which correspond to many written in our own country in the last century, books by now forgotten popular writers who once attacked important issues with a real if transitory fervor, and whose work turned out to be high-grade journalism, useful as it was cheap. One recalls David Graham Phillips, Owen Wister, Winston Churchill and even Jack London.

It is questionable whether the inexportable books of our neighbors are well served by translation, for they often tend to convince us that the tradition from which they spring is even poorer than, in essence, it often is. It would be so much easier, for example, if many of the writers simply put down as honestly as possible their proper memoirs. Instead of submitting to the compulsion to "create," *i. e.*, transpose, they could husband their energies and give us clearer snapshots or postcards of the native locale, since the artificed results of their often considerable labors resemble tinted, retouched or awkwardly montaged photographs.

Here are half a dozen stories—one each from Argentina, Mexico, Uruguay, Haiti, Ecuador and Peru. It is scarcely accidental that they should interest us in that order, for Argentina, whatever her anguish, has the richest literary tradition, and Mexico, both for her painting, and in this novel at least, has enjoyed the incalculably rich harrowing of fifty years of constant, and usually progressive, social revolution.

Mallea's "The Bay of Silence" is a book by an urbane and experienced professional which is benefited by the almost miraculous luck of an impeccable translation, which seems to a reader of the Spanish with strain, even an improvement on the original. Here, in at least the first half of the novel, there is no wall of glass, the weight of academic translationese, the footnotes explaining local names for flora, fauna, tribal gods and Spanish proverbs—which often separate us from the author's intention. It starts as a novel of considerable sensibility, if not of individual character, then at least of very lively ideas, which are articulated with tact and intensity, and which for a long time are not troubling in their ultimate abstractions. This book is a more valuable statement of what actually the Port Argentine is like than one is able to find in any of the recent journalistic histories and surveys done on Argentina. There are a number of descriptions which are brilliant, almost Olympian statements as to the cause of the anguishing tensions which are rocking the estuary of the La Plata at this moment.

Mallea knows his Gide. His magazine, Enough, inside his novel, as well as his novel within his novel and a certain elevated tone of the protestant voice can be traced to "The Counterfeiters." Mallea loves Landor and Tennyson, Darwin and Racine. He also loves Argentina. As perhaps no one else, he shows us the aching frustration, the stillborn energies, the awkward half-successes which are so much more painful than a frank failure. He does make us ache, as he shows us the ugly, vast, yet not unfascinating town. But his urbanity has a chill, the damp chill of a Buenos Aires winter, and his intellectual, self-disdainful worldliness has a depressingly deadening burden. One reads the Argentine parts with a struggling eagerness, but one rather wonders why, with his excellent critical apparatus, his eye coldly appraising the best of the world's pic-

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tures and writing, he felt that the European sections had any bearing on his story, over and above the purely autobiographical. The emotional scenes are deliberately elusive, with that exasperating mixture of sensuality and suicidal frustration which one feels, hearing the tangos and milongas of Leandro Alem. Mallea has given us the essence of Buenos Aires, and if we are at all interested in its paradox of puerility and pride, its sleeping possibilities and sad charm, this is about the best existing guidebook.

Mauricio Magdaleno's "Sunburst" is a very beautiful book. There has been no work of the imagination since Flandrau's classic "Viva Méjico!" to compare with it. The story of a typical provincial leader, born a child of the revolution, whose tragic conditioning inevitably makes him betray it, this novel has large portions of complete and surgical moral frankness. The tone is admirable. No apostrophic, lyrical patches. Not even very much self-pitying irony. Simply the statement of facts in legible personal symbols, which one never doubts because the detail is so complete, and so clear, that it never lapses into the merely exotic. It is perhaps marred by a few mechanical faults of structure, the use of a recurring Rock, the repetition of a bastardy, but these are forgivable. Anita Brenner's translation is excellent. She is colloquial to the point of using "dumbbell" and "bender" for *tonto* and *paranda*, which is certainly a great improvement, if rather an emphatic one, over the usual "silly goose" and "escapade."

Enrique Amorim's "The Horse and His Shadow" has several lovely paragraphs about the landscape of the plains of Uruguay. The castrated stallion is rather a D. H. Lawrentian device, and St. Mawr and the wild horse of "Women in Love" must perhaps hold a priority with North American readers. The translation attempts to transpose the vocative dashes and perorations of the poet. They are not exactly awkward, but their solemnity lacks an elegance which may not even have been entirely present in the original.

Once I had the good fortune to talk to Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy de Caseres about the American Novel (North and South). Borges is possibly the best Argentine poet and Bioy the most refined of the younger novelists. They had made up a horrible game, a set of rules which would guarantee the second-rate in any fiction. They continually added to their catalogue of the negative virtues which, if they could ever be set down, would comprise the final and fatal diagnosis of all novels of place.

The first rule was the rule of Symbol. The second-rate is promised by the initial statement, like a gorgeous chord, opening a tone poem by Richard Strauss, of the Tree, the Mountain, the River, the Cloud. The second-rate is ensured by the identification of Woman, Man, Earth, Sex, etc., with Tree, Mountain, etc. The Family is also an excellent assurance of the second-rate and so are original proper names, which by their flat statement are intended to produce a kind of technicolor verisimilitude. As for example:

> An agouti, seated on its hind legs, was nervously eating a pitahaya. . . . The green flesh of growing things, laid bare by the gleaming machete, was spouting thick milk. Among the torn and bleeding stems appeared the figure of a man, his face black, sweaty, shining, etc. ("Our Daily Bread," by Enrique Gil Gilbert).

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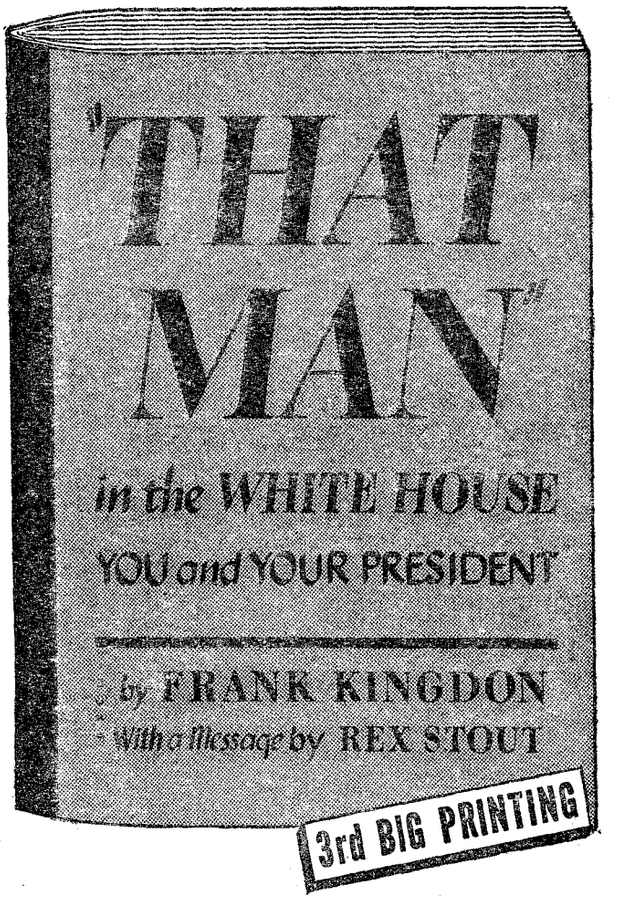

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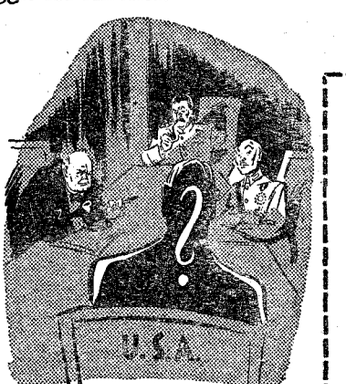

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Or is Edward Laroque Tinker's patronizing translation of the Marcelins' "Canapé-Vert" an improvement?

> . . . At once he commenced an invocation in "*langage*," that strange abracadabra which came from Africa, known only to initiates. "*Zo ouen ouel o, sobadi Sobo kalisso*" he intoned. . . . At last they heard something that came nearer with rattling bones, knocking together. It was Guêde Nibo, the grotesque spirit of death and phallic worship.

On the jacket of Ciro Alegría's "The Golden Serpent" (which snake one hardly needs to be told is the Marañon River in Peru), we are thus enticed, in a description of one of its episodes:

> This is a very short tale, very charming and graceful, and with intriguing descriptions of how fascinating a young Peruvian beauty of 18 is when she bathes in the river nude.

There is little point in mocking sober and well intentioned work. The authors of these books have won official prizes in displaying their notion of their native lands to a portion of the United States audience which is honestly interested and sympathetic, however pitiful their minority. But they do not serve their native lands very well. Because, at this distance, all Indians seem the same miserable cipher, all peons the same disastrous pawn, all forests an identical green hell, and the Andes, a photographic map in The National Geographic Magazine. The thing most urgently needed for communication by fiction is the power of particularization, the gift of presupposing vast areas of vocabulary and folk-custom, of hauling the local colorists out of their *indigenista* stylization, to create character. It is too much to ask of some countries, at this stage of their historical development. But then, let the over-eager publishers wait until there is another Mallea or Magdaleno book to translate.

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN

Mr. Anthony at Oxford

Christian Behavior, by C. S. Lewis. New York: The Macmillan Company. 70 pages. $1.
Perelandra, by C. S. Lewis. New York: The Macmillan Company. 238 pages. $2.

EARLY THIS MONTH, on the Anzio beachhead, a young American soldier was baptized in the Tyrrhenian surf and said, "I have put off coming to the Lord too long." This would be in peacetime a merely colorful news item to thousands who now will hear in it the echo of their own cry for certainties. There must be profound reasons why wars spawn so many quack religions and Messiahs, but to discover them would require an exhaustive psychological study of the relations of war and peace to personal insecurity. On a lower level, we may wonder at the alarming vogue of Mr. C. S. Lewis, whose harmless fantasies about the kingdoms of Good and Evil ("Out of the Silent Planet," "The Screwtape Letters" and now "Perelandra") have had a modest literary success, while multitudes of readers, and in Britain radio listeners, succumb to the charm of his more direct treatises on Christian conduct.

It may be that a war in which our own shining ideology is so blurred by political trickery, cowardice and double-talk, puts a desperate premium on believers from 'way back, so

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that we gain confidence from hearing them preach as gospel what we have heard ourselves saying faintly since September, 1939. I recall two Communists, both writers living shabbily on hackwork until the Nazi invasion of the USSR, when they were both instantly exalted, one to become the head of Russian intelligence to an Allied consulate, the other to serve as technical director on Hollywood's most reverent "tribute" to our gallant Russian ally. It must be the same impulse that has pitchforked Mr. Lewis into the limelight, for in doubting times completely unremarkable minor prophets are pressed into making a career of reassurance.

In the days before radio, Mr. Lewis' little volume would have been reviewed politely in the well bred magazines and no harm would have been done. But the chief danger of these homilies on behavior is their assumption of modesty. They are talks given over the radio by an Oxford don fairly recently converted to Christianity. From the way they were received in Britain, and from the eagerness of American networks to have Mr. Lewis shed the light on our own dark continent, it may be assumed that the personal values of several million Britons and Americans stand in imminent danger of the befuddlement at which Mr. Lewis is so transparently adroit. Mr. Lewis has a real radio talent. He is not, like most publicists and professional men called to the radio, a statesman or editorial writer merely wiring his normal writing style for sound. He knows that radio should find an idiom, and images, that will mean the same thing to people of very different background, an ambition that only our radio gag-writers seem to sweat over. He knows it is the first task of radio to make difficult ideas honestly clear. Since his subject is morality, or as he calls it "directions for running the human machine," and since this is the topic above all others that has exercised the finest agonies of the saints, and the best skill of poets, philosophers and psychiatrists since the beginning of time, he is tackling about the toughest assignment ever known to radio. He has to explain the Beatitudes in words of one syllable.

These noble limitations, of which he seems so conscientiously aware, would throw a better man than Mr. Lewis. That they produce in him a persuasive pseudo-simplicity, giving smooth reassurance on questions that are for most men matters of profound concern, would be unimportant if the radio did not encourage its acceptance as the sort of redemption we have all been waiting for. The exposition of every fundamental human problem from "Social morality" to "Marriage" and "Charity," comes out with a patness that murders the issues it pretends to clarify. Thus you learn (though it doesn't help) that in making a moral choice "two things are involved. One is the act of choosing. The other is the various feelings, impulses and so on which his psychological outfit presents him with, and which are the *raw material* of his choice." (What do you choose with?) Mr. Lewis' use of italics here is quite characteristic. It is a frantic make-weight used to tip the scales of an argument that will not conform to the easy balance he has arranged ahead of time. Talking of the sin of Pride, he says, "The other, and less bad, vices come from the devil working on us through our animal nature. But this doesn't come through our animal nature at all. It comes *direct* from Hell." How much more intriguingly might this discussion

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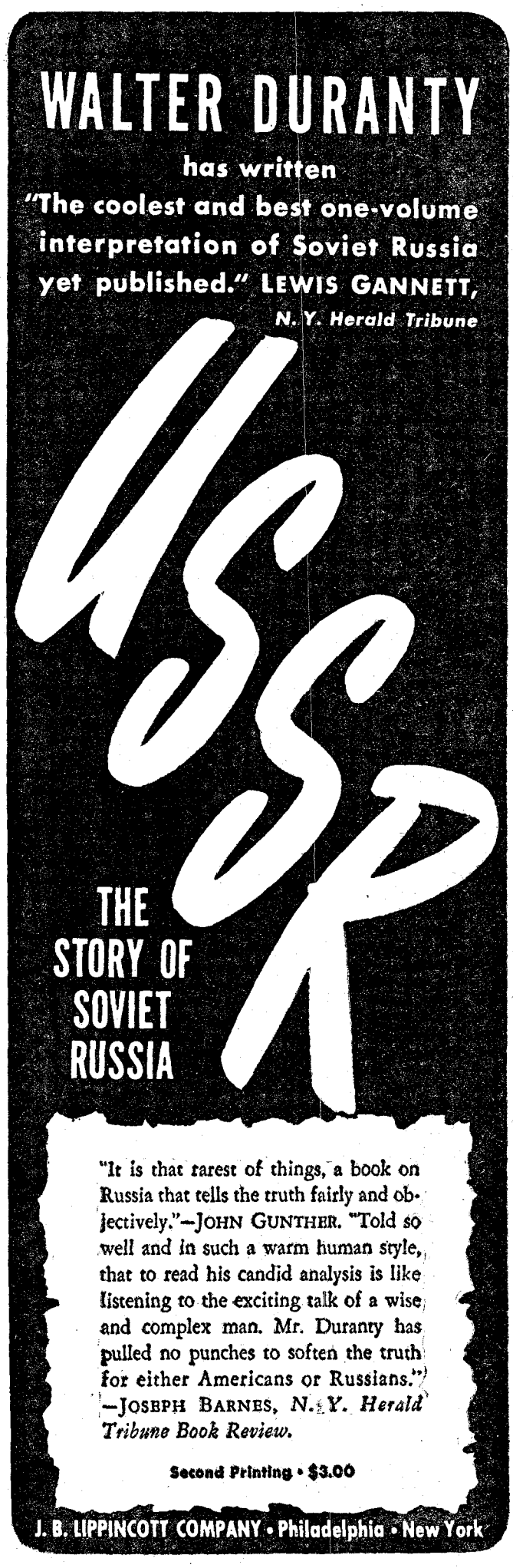
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have been prolonged if Mr. Lewis could have arranged for it to come *indirectly*. These italics remind me of the British use of such adverbs as definitely, really, *act*ually—they are testy emphases masking indecision about something that should be plain enough.

But the vortex in which Mr. Lewis flounders, while keeping up the same simple pretense of doing an easy and muscular crawl, is sex and marriage. He allows that as a bachelor it is possible he may be prejudiced, but his deep distaste (and fear?) of the whole subject reduces him to the convictions that because a young man might by a single act "populate a small village," the appetite "is in ludicrous and preposterous excess of its function"; that there is something "wrong" with the "sexual instinct" of present-day humans; that being in love was never intended to last; and that extra-marital sex is monstrous because "it isolates one kind of union from all the other kinds of union which were intended to go along with it" (by the same reasoning, it must be equally irresponsible to lunch with friends you don't live with). This is exactly, Mr. Lewis might be appalled to discover, the Puritan's view of sex, as it is the rake's. This frightened dualism is further demonstrated by a brilliant Freudian slip, revealing an unconscious identification of two nouns that bare Mr. Lewis' worst suspicions: he says, "If anyone thinks that Christians regard unchastity as *the* great vice, he is quite wrong. The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual." No wonder "pleasures" is not in italics. For this idea can lead only to Mr. Lewis' secret fear that unchastity is the best pleasure.

"Perelandra" appears superficially to be a bracing holiday from these grave matters, for it is another adventure of Dr. Ransom in search of his unearthly utopia. But it is the natural, and arid, counterpart of "Christian Behavior," for it is a fantasy compensation for Mr. Lewis' deep dissatisfaction with mankind and the world he inhabits. It would make a magnificent analytic source-book, especially as the publishers obligingly preface it with Mr. Lewis' revealing notes on himself: "I was a younger son, and we lost my mother when I was a child. . . . My first stories were nearly all about mice, but mice usually in armor killing gigantic cats. . . . I loathed school. . . . I want to be let alone, to feel I'm my own master; but since the facts seemed to be just the opposite I had to give in [to Christianity]. . . . There's no sound I like better than adult male laughter. . . . I . . . love rain. I love to hear it on the roof or gurgling down into the water butt." In "Perelandra," which is Mr Lewis' name for the more embarrassing planet Venus, Dr. Ransom-Lewis swims in oceans of unsalted water ("It was drinkable"!), rushes deliciously into gaping valleys, wins the battle of Temptation against the spirit of evil (not a gigantic cat but as grisly, and known as the Un-Man), and—if it is not too bold a word—conceives bliss in the scene of himself standing in an enchanted wood discussing loneliness and death (he had traveled from earth in a coffin) with a beautiful girl who is "totally naked" but sexless, because on Perelandra they blessedly do not know about sex.

It is at this point that an earthly book-reviewer must uncross his gross legs and tiptoe out, leaving Mr. Lewis to the absorbed serenity of his dreams. ALISTAIR COOKE

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Sincerity Is a Talent

Poems, by Dunstan Thompson. New York: Simon and Schuster. 55 pages. $2.
The Big Time, by Alfred Hayes. New York: Howell, Soskin and Company. 101 pages. $2.50.

THERE ARE, and always have been, the spurious who try to make a profession or a business out of the writing of poetry, which is, and always will be, an art. If the ambitious versifier goes to the leading contemporary poets, learns their style and the rules and gets a degree of cunning, he will be able to turn out competent pastiche and hang out a shingle on which his name will do a certain amount of swinging and shining in the sun. Passersby, especially innocent ones, will come in for treatment, be momentarily convinced by verbal demonstrations and leave wondering why they really aren't permanently affected.

What is most lacking in versifiers who make poetry their profession or business is sincerity and the ability to express it with poetic power. Only the poet who knows that the writing of poetry is an art, and is willing to accept the extreme rigors without guarantee of any kind of reward, can recognize his own sincerity at that point of intensity which is necessary to its expression. I spend time in defining an elementary point because the literary world is too busy to pay any attention to fundamentals. It is in this all-important fundamental that the two poets I here consider, Dunstan Thompson and Alfred Hayes, shine. Both are seriously talented with sincerity, both are able to say it, though of the two Thompson is by far the more exciting.

In fact "Poems," by Dunstan Thompson, is *the* event of a poetic season rich in first books. Stephen Spender in a review in Horizon mentions only two books from America, Robert Frost's and Thompson's, though he makes the mistake of saying, "It looks as if the presence of Auden in America were providing young poets there with exactly the school that they require over here." Thompson's influences are George Barker, Dylan Thomas, Frederic Prokosch, Harvard and an overdose of education and sophistication. Only a poet who takes his work as an art and with unequivocal sincerity could possibly live through all of these, and come out waving an original banner.

This book is new, different, exhilarating. The technical perfection, polished but not for its own sake, shows profound insight. The elaborate stanzaic structure is not a sleight-of-hand hiding "shocking holes of want" or elegant but empty rooms. The place is crammed, the poems full of the stuff of human emotions, hopes, despairs, glints of glory, searchlights of disillusion in a mansion of illusions. The dazzling surfaces, the complex metaphors, the baroque vocabulary, are intricately woven together, but aim at the reader a concentration of simple feeling which affects him with the power found only in a work of art. The poems are tightly written and therefore difficult to quote. But here are a few lines, for the sake of a sample, from "Largo," the best poem in the book and probably one of the important poems of the forties:

> We are the mountaineers who perish on the slopes
> Of heaven high and perfect Himalayan peak:
> Exhausted by the cold, we can no longer speak

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To one another—only signal by the ropes.
Those best before us have, alas,
Plunged through a gentian-blue crevasse:
The snow-blind flaw. Their glacial hopes
Shine as a stream of desperate stars, icebound, and bleak,
That mock their nimbused glory from a frigid lake.

But the lover of modern poetry must get this book and convince himself.

Alfred Hayes has none of Thompson's dexterous technique or flare of sophistication, but he is real, nevertheless. His poems are socially conscious, all about the movies, bars, dance halls, sex, the big time in the big city, no concealed sneering at the poor for being poor. Hayes's structure is lacking in form; his technical equipment is insufficient for a focused presentation of his emotional matter. However, the emotion is pure and forceful and his book, "The Big Time," is an American document of importance.

OSCAR WILLIAMS

Contributors

J. DONALD KINGSLEY is professor of Government at Antioch College and editor of The Antioch Review. He is co-author, with David W. Petegorsky, of "Strategy for Democracy." A new book, "Representative Bureaucracy," is to be published this month.

MARJORIE R. CLARK is a college professor whose articles have appeared in several periodicals.

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F. O. MATTHIESSEN, professor of American Literature at Harvard University, is the author of several volumes of criticism of which the most recent is "American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman." He is working on a new book, "Henry James: The Major Phase."

RALPH BATES lived for many years in Spain and served as a brigade commissar with the Loyalists in the civil war. He is the author, among other books, of two novels dealing with the revolutionary movement in Spain, "Lean Men" and "The Olive Field."

LINCOLN KIRSTEIN is the author of "For My Brother," a novel about Mexico, recently published by the Hogarth Press in London. For the last year he has been stationed at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

ALISTAIR COOKE is a special correspondent on American affairs to the British Broadcasting Corporation and chief American feature writer to the Kemsley Newspapers. He is also a special correspondent of The London Times.

OSCAR WILLIAMS is the author of "The Man Coming Toward You," a book of poems, and editor of "New Poems: 1944," an anthology scheduled for publication late this summer by Howell, Soskin.

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